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by

Brigham Young University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

practitioners searching for the sacred or holy in theatre have largely neglected discussing narrative as a core element of their endeavours. Specifically, I will examine pilgrimage narrative, a potential blue print for heavenly theatre, but one which is not prescriptive. I will engage with pilgrimage through the seminal writings on Christian pilgrimage by the anthropologist Victor Turner and his wife Edith Turner, and go on to explore how the pilgrimage narrative is deeply embedded in *King Lear*. I will then conclude that this pilgrimage narrative parallels in many respects the journey of Jesus Christ, and how this parallel lends itself to the creation of heavenly theatre. When interviewed, the Canadian director Robert LePage once said he believed the purpose of theatre was to put us, "in contact with the gods" (Delgado 143). I agree with him, and this thesis represents the very beginnings of my personal journey, or pilgrimage as it were, to understand a little more as to how that may be possible.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Chapter One – Heavenly Theatre and the Pilgrimage Narrative

My understanding of heavenly theatre finds its genesis in Peter Brook's writings on holy theatre. The most succinct definition of his meaning of the term reads,

> I am calling it the Holy Theatre for short, but it could be called The Theatre of the Invisible-Made-Visible: the notion that the stage is a place where the invisible can appear has a deep hold on our thoughts [. . .] Many audiences all over the world will answer positively from their own experience that they have seen the face of the invisible through an experience on the stage that transcended their experience in life.
>
> (Brook 47-8)

Brook never refers to this "face of the invisible" as any sort of traditional monotheistic sense of God. Instead he uses some of the following terms to elaborate on it: "sacred invisibility", "the invisible", "sacred art", "theatre of miracles", "grace", and "spiritual world". Holy theatre for him then is that theatre that puts audiences in touch with this sacred invisibility. I agree with Brook's definition of holy theatre because I have experienced it. However, to me there is more than holy theatre; there is what I have chosen to term as heavenly theatre. Due to my personal experiences in the theatre, which I interpret in part through my faith, Brook's definition of holy theatre lacks detail and specificity for me. So often I have felt, whilst watching a theatrical production, what I can only term *spiritual experiences*, which I understand and believe to be a manifestation of deity, of which I will give examples. My understanding of Brook's sacred invisibility is specifically tied to this manifestation, hence the need for my term heavenly theatre. So though I agree with Brook's definition of holy theatre, namely making the invisible

visible, I choose to use my own term heavenly theatre because I have placed a very specific reading on what that invisibility is that Brook speaks of, namely the Holy Ghost, as understood and defined within LDS theology. I would rather use the new term of heavenly theatre, than enlarge upon Brook's notion of holy theatre, because to impose my concept of the Holy Spirit upon Brook's term seems to Christianise it. His holy theatre is now a well known term in theatrical discourse, and he personally didn't directly link it to Christian doctrine, even though some of the words he used to describe it come from Christian terminology. I will describe the Holy Ghost within the LDS faith, and how I feel I have experienced that in a very personal way within the theatre. I am detailed in my writings on the function and manifestation of the Holy Ghost because my concept of heavenly theatre is when the Holy Ghost is present at a theatrical performance, meaning an understanding of how it works is foundational to an understanding of heavenly theatre.

As an active member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter Mormon or LDS), I have sincere faith in the doctrines of the LDS Church. One of the most fundamental of these doctrines is belief in the Holy Ghost. Christians at large believe in the Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost as a member of the Trinity, believing the Holy Ghost to be the same being as God the Father and Jesus Christ, but in a different manifestation. Within Mormonism however, the Holy Ghost is the third member of the godhead, a spiritual being distinct in personage from God the Father or Jesus Christ the son and separate from them, which is different to the Trinitarian view of the Christian godhead. I write of the Holy Ghost then from within my specific Christian LDS belief system as opposed to Christianity in general because my personal understanding of the Holy Spirit is intimately tied to my Mormoness, not only my identity as a Christian.

The Holy Ghost is indeed a God within Mormon faith, working in absolute unity and oneness with God the Father and God Jesus Christ, though a separate being from them. Perhaps the clearest LDS scripture on this matter is found in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, a book of modern revelations received by the prophet Joseph Smith and revered by Mormons as scripture: “The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us” (Section 130.22).

This explains that the Holy Ghost literally dwells within people, and is a spiritual as opposed to corporeal being to aid this function. It is Spirit speaking to spirit, as it were. The Holy Ghost’s presence can be felt by individuals all over the world at any given time, and is likened often to the sun, which is present in one place, but its heat and light can be enjoyed by many at any time. Within the LDS faith, it is taught that the Holy Ghost can rarely be discerned with mortal eyes, making it therefore invisible, but its’ influence can be felt. Some of the feelings it engenders within the individual are described in Galatians, in the New Testament, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” (Galatians 5.22).

Furthermore its role is also to confirm eternal truths into the hearts of all individuals, especially the role and existence of God the Father and Jesus Christ. In the *Book of Mormon* Jesus said, “and the Holy Ghost beareth record of the Father and me” (3 Nephi 11.32). The Holy Ghost is also a teacher. In the *Gospel of John*, Christ says to his apostles, to help them prepare for his departure from them, “But the Comforter, which is

the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (14:26).

The Holy Ghost then not only comforts and engenders love and compassion, but also teaches individuals specifically of Christ's role and his teachings. In LDS scripture, in *The Pearl of Great Price*, Jesus Christ states that all things are created to bear record, or carry an imprint as it were, of him:

> And behold, all things have their likeness, and all things are created and made to bear record of me, both things which are temporal and things which are spiritual; things which are in the heavens above and things which are on the earth, and things which are in the earth, and things which are under the earth, both above and beneath: all things bear record of me. (Moses 6.63)

This bearing record of Christ is integral to my understanding of heavenly theatre. This scripture teaches that all things created by Christ (seen as the Creator in LDS theology) bear record of him. Heavenly theatre must likewise "bear record" of Christ or his teachings, in order to invite the Holy Ghost, whose key role it is to teach of Christ.

My most profound encounter as an audience member with experiencing the Holy Ghost during a performance, the sacred invisibility that Brook refers to, was when watching a production of Athol Fugard's *The Island* that was staged at the Lyttelton, National Theatre in London in 2000. John Kani and Winston Ntshona performed in the production I saw, both the original actors from its first production in the 1970's. These were men who had spent time on Robben Island themselves, and devised the play from their experiences, which I'm sure added to it being a spiritual experience. There was

indeed grace in their story and performance, meaning that the feelings the production engendered in me were sacred, deeply spiritual and took me beyond my daily existence. I experienced what I personally understand to be a manifestation of deity, which is feeling the presence of the Holy Spirit. I felt a deep and profound connection with those around me and furthermore a reaching out from within myself to an innate goodness: in simpler terms, I experienced a deep compassion, love even, for humanity. This love is one of the main fruits or manifestations of feeling the Holy Spirit.

Another experience wherein I felt what I term as the presence of the Holy Spirit during a theatrical performance was watching an excellent production of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* in London in the summer of 2005. When Linda, Willie's wife laments over his grave, I was taught specifically by the Holy Ghost of the innate worth of every individual. This is more than an intellectual process. It is a spiritual learning, a learning that takes place within the soul through spiritual feelings. When I left the theatre that night and travelled on the Underground home, I looked on every person I encountered differently. I experienced a profound love for each one of them, strangers all. The experience was tangible, visceral almost, and I had been stirred, wrenched even from my daily grind of self-absorption to look with compassion, kindness and love upon all others. The mask or façade of my own making had been stripped from me, and I was open, vulnerable, and caring for others far beyond my usual self. These feelings, the compassionate impulse, I attribute to the manifestation of the Holy Ghost upon my soul, which the production enabled.

To me then, heavenly theatre encompasses Brook's definition of holy theatre, but is also an experience in the theatre wherein the Holy Ghost, a deity, is able to be present

and engender such feelings of profound love within me. Attending *The Island* back in 2000, that deep compassion and love I felt, to me was a manifestation of the Holy Ghost being present and confirming through spiritual feelings the heartfelt cry of that incredible play – the inherent equality and worth of all human beings, and the great need for tenderness in our interactions with others. Likewise with *Death of a Salesman*. Others who have experienced the same feelings at theatres, who do not share my personal beliefs shaped by my religious convictions, may disagree whole heartedly with my defining this experience as heavenly theatre, when the Holy Ghost is present. Such disagreement is fine. I am not intending to persuade anyone to my way of thinking who believes otherwise to me. Instead, I feel that I am pursuing that challenge Brook made in *The Empty Space*, "if the need for a true contact with a sacred invisibility through the theatre still exists, then all possible vehicles must be re-examined" (54). And that is what I aim to do in suggesting some stepping stones or pointers towards creating this heavenly theatre.

Theatre Practitioners' Search for the Sacred

It is this heavenly theatre that I hope for when I attend productions, and it is this heavenly theatre that I desire to create. As such, in the spirit of learning from those who have blazed the trail before hand, it is only wise to look to the works and writings of others who have had somewhat similar aims. My desire to create heavenly theatre has been both informed and at times enkindled by the thoughts and discoveries of those who have genuinely sought for the sacred in theatre. I have studied the writings of the individuals I will discuss, and where possible their works, and I am indebted in some degree to each of them. Though the practitioners and anthropologists I will be looking at may not have defined their work as a search for heavenly theatre, there seems to have

been similar intent. They all sought to create theatre that took people far beyond their ordinary existence, and enabled them to have some sort of sacred experience, meaning something spiritual, profound and akin to the experience of worship.

The people whose writing and work I have chosen to review are some of those who, other than Victor Turner, openly acknowledged a search for the sacred through theatre in the past 50 or so years, namely Peter Brook, Antonin Artaud, Jerzy Grotowski, Walter Kerr, Richard Schechner, and Victor Turner. The majority of these people were doing their most influential work from the 1940's – 80's, which begs the question why study them, and not more recent writings on the matter? I believe Christopher Innes answers that question astutely. In 1993, his book *Avant Garde Theatre 1892 – 1992* was published, an updated version of his 1981 book interestingly called *Holy Theatre.* In his 1993 publication he writes that the techniques and concerns of practitioners who focused on searching for the sacred in theatre, from the 1940's onwards, had been absorbed into the cultural mainstream by the early 1990's (Innes 222). Those practitioners I will be looking at were initially seen as the avant garde, and of such work Innes wrote, "the avant garde has mounted a successful take-over of the traditional/establishment stage, makings its principles the driving force of contemporary mainstream theatre" (Innes 222). In concurrence with Innes' assessment, I am choosing to examine the individuals listed because some of their work has been key to influencing what is mainstream theatre practice today. Furthermore, from the early 1990's onwards, what has been written on the sacred or holy in theatre appears largely to have been studies of the theatrical elements of ritual either in non-western culture, or in previous eras long gone. Indeed, other than Erika Fischer-Lichte's *Theatre, Sacrifice, Ritual*, published in 2005, and focusing on

political theatre and manipulation in the twentieth century, Christopher Innes 1993 book seems to have been the last major work that was taking the pulse, as it were, of the sacred in Western theatre. The discourse seems to have dried up somewhat: people tend to discuss what is happening on the fringes of the main stream, not what has been absorbed into it. Neither the scope nor intent of this thesis allows for an in-depth examination of how the search for the sacred in the avant-garde was absorbed into the mainstream. Innes' book is available for those who would like to follow his argument upon this in more detail. Suffice to say that Innes' conclusion, that the avant garde exploration of the sacred and ritual was absorbed into the mainstream, helps explain why the theatre practitioners I have chosen to examine were doing their most important work on the sacred in theatre from the 1940-80's. The practitioners I will examine were really the last people discussing the notion of sacred and holy theatre. Even though their ideas and tools may have been absorbed into the mainstream as Innes argues, I believe the discussion is not over. I am continuing the discourse of those that I will now review, because I believe there is an integral aspect of this search for the sacred in theatre that has been largely overlooked: narrative. And narrative becomes integral to heavenly theatre.

What becomes apparent when considering the work and writings of the following individuals is that they define and search for holy or sacred theatre through production values. By production values I mean all those tools of theatre that are used to create the work, other than the written script. For example, for Brook, the holy was found ultimately through the actor in the space and their ability to engage creatively the audiences' imagination. Artaud sought for the sacred through music, intoning, puppets etc. through which he sought to shock the physical senses of the audience. Grotowski trained actors to

strip away all their pretence and sacrifice themselves, physically and emotionally in honest performance, to find the sacred. Schechner invited the audience to become part of the rituals on stage, in order to create a sense of sacred community amongst them, and lastly Turner sought to build bridges of understanding between very different cultures by performing one another's rituals. These aims were sought for through the rehearsal process and performances. Narrative was rarely written about by any of these individuals as being integral to the creation of this sacred or holy theatre. I am not implying that these practitioners did not fulfil their own stated ends of holy or sacred theatre, nor that some of their audiences didn't receive the work as such. Instead, I am observing that in their various and detailed writings on the creation of sacred or holy theatre, and the role of ritual within that, narrative, the first step towards my concept of heavenly theatre, was not discussed as integral. This is interesting to me. I assume that these practitioners chose certain play scripts for a reason, but they little discussed in their various publications how these play scripts, and specifically the narratives they told, aided them in their search for the holy or sacred in theatre. Whilst I believe production values, including acting preparation and style of performance, set and costume choices, and the working approach fostered by the company, are important in creating what I perceive heavenly theatre to be, in which the Holy Ghost is manifest, they are not the only considerations. These are the people who have written and talked most about sacred or holy theatre in this and the last century, and yet they little discussed narrative. To me, such things as the rehearsal process, acting technique, set, costume, audience arrangement and involvement etc. are the building materials for creating this holy edifice they and many others have sought for and continue to seek for in theatre, and I would propose that the narrative and script are

the architectural plans. This is no great revelatory insight, but in examining the first considerations for creating heavenly theatre, as I desire to do, it is an important differentiation. I believe that the desire to create heavenly theatre must begin with an examination of narrative as realised through script, the architectural plans, which will then be articulated through production values.

Whilst I have ideas on production values, the physical building of the edifice as it were, that lend themselves to heavenly theatre, such is not the scope of this thesis, other than briefly in the conclusion. Instead, I would like to narrow my focus to the foundational plan: narrative. I recognise that when a script is prepared and dressed for performance, the choices made will shape that script a certain way, very much affecting the narrative told. Such is the nature of theatre, but that doesn't discount an investigation into the role of narrative in creating heavenly theatre. However, before going on to explore narrative I would like to examine those practitioners I've mentioned, in order to engage with their important and foundational work in this area, and in so doing highlight my observation that narrative has been largely omitted as an integral element of holy and sacred theatre in recent years.

Peter Brook

Peter Brook is celebrated as one of the greatest living directors of our age, and I begin by exploring his writings because he is the most main-steam of the theatre practitioners I will be examining, and has had great influence on my thoughts on this matter. In Peter Brook's canonical text *The Empty Space*, first published in 1968, his second chapter is dedicated to what he terms "The Holy Theatre", which he defines as making the invisible visible, as I have discussed. This is the essence of Brook's search, to

eliminate all that is boring from the stage, and find and show this “sacred invisibility” (54). This he argues is vital, and only possible through staging true rituals, which as a contemporary society we are lacking (51). However, I don’t think that has stopped him from trying to stage true rituals, which first manifested itself in his collaboration with Charles Morowitz in 1964 in his Royal Shakespeare Company “Theatre of Cruelty” season, inspired by the writings of Artaud. He continued this search through many of his subsequent productions, such as *The Marat/Sade, US, The Tempest,* Seneca’s *Oedipus* and his renowned *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, all done by 1970. Some critics feel he privileged the physical body in these works, manifesting a desire to destroy the spoken word, which Brook denies. Instead he feels that his is a process of stripping away all that is extraneous, often including text, to truly communicate with the audience and reveal that sacred invisibility. He developed an approach of stripping bare the stage as much as possible, thus freeing the audience’s imaginations and thereby actively inviting them more into the creation of the piece. His working method seems to have been almost one of scientific research into how to communicate an idea theatrically. He placed his actors into exercises with strict limitations that ultimately would aid true expression. Here we start to get a real sense of Brook’s notion of holy theatre, or the invisible made visible, namely that it is primarily made possible *through the actor.* Brook writes about his rehearsal exercises and techniques that: “The actor then found that to communicate his invisible meanings he needed concentration, he needed will; he needed to summon all his emotional reserves; he needed courage; he needed clear thought” (Brook 57). Brook’s understanding then of achieving Holy Theatre is very much dependent upon the

individual actor having the ability to communicate or make visible the invisible to the audience. Of this Brook writes,

> We experimented with ritual in the sense of repetitive patterns, seeing how it is possible to present more meaning, more swiftly than by a logical unfolding of events. Our aim for each experiment, good or bad, successful or disastrous, was the same: can the invisible be made visible through the performer's presence? (Brook 58)

Brook's stripping away of more conventional sets and stages is all an attempt to highlight the performer, and thus increase the communication between them and the audience. However, in trying to capture the invisible, Brook felt it vital not to lose touch with the base, the "rough" or plain common sense. He looked to Shakespeare as the ideal here, pointing out that, "His aim continually is holy, metaphysical, yet he never makes the mistake of staying too long on the highest plane. He knew how hard it is for us to keep company with the absolute so he continually bumps us down to earth" (Brook 69).

Yet this search for holy theatre, through the performer making visible the invisible all around us, is not without its philosophical tone. Whilst Brook's productions of this time were not necessarily nihilistic, most of them seemed to lean towards the existential. For example, in his *King Lear* he cut any moments of the script that offered a sense of hope or redemption for humankind, such as the servants offering to help Gloucester after his blinding (Leggatt 54). Christopher Innes states:

> Not only was existential honesty itself seen as 'the most positive attitude' available in the twentieth-century context of genocide, political torture and

> total warfare, the destructive anarchy of sexual urges expressed in these productions was itself considered liberating. (Innes 132)

Brook's *Tempest* for example had Caliban raping Miranda and sexually assaulting Prospero with the final ceremony being a tribal mating ritual (Innes 132). There was the strong recurrence of the use of ritual interwoven with violent images running through all of Brook's productions at this time. His *Oedipus* was a prime example of this and Innes argued that Brook faced the same difficulties as all of those influenced by Artaud: "the basic problem facing all the inheritors of Artaud who seek to affect spectators directly by using rituals in the modern secular context [is] these have no religious significance and therefore no subjective value for the audience" (Innes 133). This was a dilemma Brook acknowledged himself, recognizing that rituals do not unite us as a people anymore. However, his work at this time seems to suggest that if there were any ritual that comes close, it is the ritual of violence. One of Brook's actors questioned the appropriateness of presenting such a violent work as *Oedipus*.

> The play is such a violent vehicle [but] to play it down would be dishonest [. . .] Blood, torn eyeballs, torn insides and torn gizzards are mentioned about every five seconds for two hours. Death, disaster, plague, sickness, horror are the main ingredients of the play [. . .] In fact I wondered whether it was right to perform this in front of people. In one of the speeches – the one in which the slave describes Oedipus tearing his eyes out – people in the audience became physically ill, and the St. John's Ambulance Brigade was always on hand ready to carry people out. It happened quite often. (Innes 134)

It seems hard to reconcile such violent stage imagery with Brook's acknowledged search to make true contact with sacred invisibility on stage. Brook seems to recognise that however, and talking of those who condemned such violence in his work, he writes:

> We musn't allow ourselves to become the dupes of nostalgia [. . .] our vision is now locked to the dark end of the spectrum. Today the theatre of doubting, of unease, of trouble, of alarm, seems truer than the theatre with a noble aim [. . . our opponents] are not searching for a holy theatre, they are not talking about a theatre of miracles: they are talking of the tame play where 'higher' only means 'nicer'[. . .] Alas, happy endings cannot be ordered like wine from cellars. (Brook 49–50, 53)

It seems then that Brook's search for the sacred or holy in theatre was made possible by the individual actor making the invisible visible, and culminated in many productions (perhaps omitting Brook's *Dream* only) that were a ritualistic cry of violence. Reviewing the list of his productions again, this becomes evident: his "Theatre of Cruelty" season, culminating in Artaud's *The Spurt of Blood* and the *The Screens,* in which "naked hatred" was presented on stage (Innes 129); Peter Weiss' *The Marat/Sade,* which stressed the sadism, violence and insanity of the play; *US,* which had harrowing scenes of cruelty and suffering; *The Tempest,* wherein violence, incest and sexuality were highlighted; and lastly Seneca's *Oedipus*. In 1977 he also directed Jarry's *Ubi roi* which continued exploring extreme violence on stage.

However, Brook's work developed beyond searching for the holy through the ritual of violence. Instead it became more of a search for the primitive, which we see beginning in his collaboration with Ted Hughes on *Orghast* in which vocal sounds were

used to try and communicate (reportedly with varying degrees of success) ancient mythology. His travels in Africa with a group of international actors in the 1970's was a search for this "primitive" form of theatre, leading to his production of *The Conference of the Birds*, based on a C12th Persian poem. His work seemed to be coming out of a more anthropological lens, with the 1975 production of *The Ik,* based on a dying Ugandan tribe, following *The Birds.* However, his work was open to criticism for being a Rousseauesque romantic look at primitive peoples (Innes 144). These productions culminated in *The Mahabharata* in 1985, wherein he was still looking to mythology, this time the great Hindu epic, to carry resonances and echoes for all mankind. He performed it with a multi-national cast, as he had done since creating the International Centre for Theatre Research (CIRT) in 1969 in Paris. Indeed, it seems that his shift to a more anthropological and mythological search for the holy in theatre is coupled with his founding of the CIRT. And his more recent works of the late 1990's and into the 21st Century seem to reflect the culmination of this work.

I saw his production of *Le Costum*e, performed in French with English subtitles in England in the year 2001. Retelling the story of a husband who discovers his wife's adultery in the small townships of South Africa, he chooses to punish her by constantly having a man's suit with them, representing the lover she took in, at all they do. Here was the very barest of stages. Furthermore, actors were communicating by making the invisible visible. By this I mean that to experience their performance as an audience member was to watch them do nothing it seemed but communicate everything: it was effortless and graceful, a word Brook uses a great deal to describe the sacred invisible; grace. It felt like myth or Greek tragedy all rolled into one, with a constant unrealised

threat of violence throughout that prevented us ever feeling too comfortable as an audience, though we did laugh at deliberate comic interludes. It was one of the best pieces of theatre I have seen and to my understanding, it fulfilled Brook's own criteria for holy theatre, namely actors making the invisible visible through their courage, clear thought, emotional reserve and will.

Antonin Artaud

When I first encountered Artuad's writings in *The Theatre and its Double* I was simultaneously appalled and enthralled. Appalled by what seemed to me to be a text that called for the self-destruction of the actor, and enthralled simply by the sheer scope of his vision. However, his writings are full of contradictions and impossibilities, and I have come to agree with Brook, who wrote that, "Artaud applied is Artaud betrayed" (Brook 60). Artaud's writings essentially reject logic and reason, seeking to replace them with irrationality, dreams and delirium. Briefly put, his concept of a theatre of cruelty outlined in *Theatre and its Double* is the destruction of the audience's perceptions of a false reality, and their liberation from societal ties. This he plans to do physically, by shocking his audience with an assault of sound and image, overcoming the sanctity of the written word, and finding a unique theatrical language half-way between gesture and thought. There is also the madman's rage against society in his writings: "our present social state is iniquitous and should be destroyed. If this fact is a pre-occupation for the theatre, it is even more a matter for machine guns" (Artaud 42). Calling heavily upon the ritualistic use of dancing and sound, inspired by the Balinese dancers he saw, he argues that staging ritual is vital to fully pierce the audience's barriers. In a sense, the theatrical practice he calls for in his writings is quasi-religious, inasmuch as it seeks to invert the

moral order of the day. He ultimately seeks to bring his audiences in contact with spiritual freedom through the theatre acting as a “plague”. However, this spiritual liberation is to be found through very physical means, and the two are equated in Artaud’s writings.

The two attempts I have seen at staging Artaud’s *A Spurt of Blood* have led me to agree with Innes, who writes that Artaud’s theories misunderstood or taken too literally, “have produced only unrealizable strategies or self-indulgent, undramatic psychotherapy” (Innes 93). And I would add actors covered with bruises. However, his work needs to be considered, because he calls for a theatre that is sacred: a place, like a cathedral or church, where a greater reality is to be found, though the Christian faith obscures that reality to him (Artaud 102-3). However, his influence on Brook and the Western avant-garde movement since is undoubted, and he is important for the sheer scale of his influence through both his writings, and his use of speech and sound, gestures and patterned movement, puppets, manikins and grotesque distortion on stage, all of which have left imprints in work since. Yet whilst acknowledging that influence, Brook raises a great question about Artaud’s work, that must ask be asked when confronting his vision of theatre: “Is it really holy – or is Artaud in his passion dragging us back to a nether world, away from striving, away from the light…is there even a fascist smell in the cult of unreason?” (Brook 60). It has always seemed to me that whatever sacredness Artaud sought, it was deeply destructive. However, the theatrical tools he suggests certainly have their merit.

Jerzy Grotowski

Grotowski's writings on sacredness in theatre, and how it can be achieved, are more thorough than any other practitioners. Fundamentally, Grotowski believes that the purpose of art is "to help us transcend our solitude" (Grotowski 57). He writes "The theatre is an act engendered by human reactions and impulses, by contacts between people. This is both a biological and a spiritual act" (Grotowski 58). Ultimately, there is a deeply religious element to this human contact. Grotowski believed that when actors were honest and truly open to the audience that they would literally be made clean: "you will be without sin. If the memory is one of sin, afterwards you will be free from this sin. It is a kind of redemption" (Grotowski 234). At the heart of Grotowski's work is this deep and abiding honesty, which he terms morality. It isn't just honesty in acting about the darkness in life, the suffering, but also honesty about the brightness and joy of life. He insightfully writes:

> Do not always seek sad associations of suffering, of cruelty. Seek also the bright and the luminous. Often we can be opened by sensual recollections of beautiful days, by memories of paradise lost, by the memory of moments, short in themselves, when we were truly opened, when we had confidence, when we were happy. This is often more difficult than to penetrate into the dark stretches, since it is a treasure we do not wish to give. (Grotowski 241)

Such honesty, leading to both actor and audience member transcending their solitude, is brought about by a process of stripping down the actor, laying bare, without the least hint of egotism or enjoyment. It is ultimately not a process of teaching the actor

something, but of eliminating resistance, a process Grotowski terms *via negative*: not a collection of skills but an eradication of blocks. This leads to a direct, live "communion" with the audience, and theatre cannot survive without this communion between actor and audience, though it can survive without everything else including lights, make-up, costume etc. This focus on the actor/audience relationship or communion is what Grotowski terms "poor theatre". In this communion, actors become a spiritual light to the audience through very disciplined techniques. Grotowski believes that if the actor's body can't do anything other than the average, then it isn't performing a spiritual act. He seeks to strip away the tricks of actors, find absolute honesty and truth in them, and then demands rigorous physical discipline to express that truth theatrically. If, on the other hand, the actor is only trying to win the favour of the audience, Grotowski sees it as prostitution. However, he feels that this can be turned into a kind of holiness. This can be done through sacrificing the actors body, and through the actors own self-penetration, the audience member can do the same thing. Grotowski believes that through this the actor literally repeats the atonement for the audience (Grotowski 33). This actor becomes a holy actor, and great humility is necessary as a pre-requisite for the actor to achieve this sacrifice for the audience. As a performer they are required to give themselves fully as in love. And this sacrifice the actor makes for the audience requires the right sort of audience member to partake of it. Grotowski states they are not performing for someone to satisfy their cultural needs, nor are they meeting someone's desire to relax after a hard day at work. Rather,

> We are concerned with the spectator who has genuine spiritual needs and who really wishes, through confrontation with the performance, to analyse

> himself….. who undergoes an endless process of self-development, whose unrest is not general but directed towards a search for truth about himself and his mission in life. (Grotowski 40)

The plays Grotowski chose to present with his Polish Laboratory Theatre, which he founded in 1960, were vehicles that he felt allowed this self-transcendence of the actor, and by implication the prepared audience member, to achieve. His most important productions were *Akropolis*, Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus, The Constant Prince, and Apocalypsis cum Figuris*. With the Polish Laboratory Theatre, he didn't do many more than these main productions between 1960 and 1970, when he decided not to create any new stage productions, but instead continue to work with the ones he had developed. In a brief discussion that was related to narrative, Grotowski points out how each of these plays revolve around central themes of damnation and salvation, martyrdom and mortification of the flesh to enable transcendence beyond self, generating what Grotowski sees as "translumination", where the spirit literally shines through the body. These plays parody conventional organised Christianity, whilst pointing to peoples' innate spirituality.

What becomes apparent in reading Grotowski's work is that though he accuses contemporary theatre of artistic kleptomania, his writings demonstrate some degree of religious, specifically Catholic, kleptomania, with his relentless use of biblical imagery in his approach to acting (atonement/sacrifice/communion/ 'holy' actors as postulates, etc). Grotowski wrote about the possibility of creating a secular sacrum in the theatre, and furthermore stated "Don't get me wrong. I speak about holiness as an unbeliever. I mean a 'secular holiness'" (Grotowski 33). However, it becomes apparent that what

Grotowski's work actually represents in the theatre is the foundation for a new religion, borrowing from the language of the old. His work is deeply sincere, and the deity is now truth, honesty and self-penetration, and theatre the communion to reach it. The actor "atones" for the audience member through selfless and humble sacrifice, and is forgiven themselves in the process. Actor's are postulants, all making Grotowski, as far as I can see, the father/god figure in his work. He doesn't give himself this title, though he does acknowledge the need to work with actors as a father would his children, saying one must be strict, like a father or an older brother, interestingly two Christian titles for God the Father and Jesus Christ (Grotowski 41).

Without disparaging his marvellous contribution in any way, his writings and work seems to say, "Religion is dead! Long live Religion!" And this new religion's birthing ground is the theatre where the actor, the director, and the audience member are born anew and ultimately saved through the service of each other. I am a great believer that we can leave the theatre changed, which is indeed a birthing of sorts, but Grotowski's search for salvation through theatre, specifically through the appropriation of Christianity, seems to have been paradoxically the source of his productions strength but ultimately their mutation away from theatrical performance. That strength came from symbols and rituals that came very much from the cultural and religious heritage of the people he performed for. His archetypal myths weren't foreign. The paradigms he worked within and symbols he used had deep resonances, unlike, for example, Brooks *Orghast*, of which critics complained it remained foreign and impenetrable to them (Innes 141). However, the natural progression of Grotowski's *via negativa* was the abandonment of theatre performance all together. It has been persuasively argued that he

never abandoned his main oeuvre of interest (Warner), but he certainly did stop creating theatre. Instead with groups from various cultures and backgrounds, he sought to find sources of life and existence, through disciplines such as yoga, dervishes, shamanism and Zen martial arts. Though he called these attempts "Theatres of Sources", they were not related to theatrical performance. These searches led to what can only be termed rites of passage, one example being an individual running bare-foot through the woods, leading to a type of baptism in a stream, followed by dancing about a fire at night and breakfast the following day, often of baked bread (Innes 165). In these initiations, and others like them, there is a culmination of Grotowski's work, with him setting up his own semi-religious order, mirroring in some aspects the Christian pattern, especially in baptism and communion. Grotowski's search for the sacred in theatre ultimately led him to this re-enactment of religious ritual, but his entire journey has left a rich theatrical legacy.

Walter Kerr

Walter Kerr, the Pulitzer Prize winning theatre critic, writer and director, published a collection of theatrical essays in 1971, one of which was *God on the Gymnasium Floor*, the essay after which the collection was titled. Though his article is over 30 years old now, it is certainly worth reviewing in this thesis because in it Kerr took the pulse of theatrical life and practice in the 1960's in relation to religion, ritual and the sacred.

Kerr argues that theatre is trying to re-birth itself. The first birth of drama lay with the Greeks' worship of Dionysus, and the second in medieval times with the elaboration of the mass that ultimately lead to the mystery and passion plays. From these he surmises that religion gives birth to theatre, and argues that the third attempt is happening as he

writes, but that unlike these previous two "birthings" there is no common belief, no motivating force, ultimately no shared faith in Western society.

Kerr critiques and compares the work of three practitioners or companies as he discusses his "return to the sacred" in theatre. Joseph Chaikin's *Open Theatre* used Genesis as the foundation of some of their shows, and to Kerr represents the best of efforts in the late 60's to "re-create" theatre out of religion. He writes with a certain sorrow of Julian Beck's and Judith Melina's nomadic *Living Theatre*, comparing their lack of discipline with the control and discipline of the *Open Theatre*, and concluded with the "unbearable truth" that both life and theatre have passed the *Living Theatre* company by. Lastly he examines the work of Jerzy Grotowski, arguing that Grotowski respects his audience's "public privacy" in a way *The Living Theatre* fails to, and is all the stronger for it. Common elements Kerr saw in all of these searches for sacred theatre was the reduction of language to ritual repetitions, miming our way to the mythic, the body as dominate over text, and performance in the 'real'(i.e.: no distance between actor and what they are doing, no 'character' played per se).

Kerr concludes this remarkable essay with an overview of what he sees as the terrible struggle of the theatre to give birth to itself, writing about the desire of an audience for a ceremony or myth on stage to make them a part of it. How can this happen though, Kerr asks, when any Western audience is made up of non-believers and believers who diverge so much in their beliefs? An audience in Kerr's time, the same as our own today, was, religiously speaking, amorphous, diffuse and structurally incoherent. He points out that the creators of the work recognise the fragmented nature of their audience's faith structure, or lack of a faith structure all together, and so embrace non-

structure willingly in their performances to reflect this. He feels that the productions hope to uncover whatever residual binding belief may be found in the audience's "subconscious", to attempt to find a common religious denominator. In so doing Kerr feels strongly that we have reversed the process, namely that these practitioners are trying to find a shared religion out of theatre, when religion should be "birthing" the new theatre: "We are trying to grow religion out of drama, so that we can grow drama out of religion once we have got it" (Kerr 40). Whilst doubting that this is possible, he believes people must continue with the experiment. Kerr emphasises the sheer enormity and difficulty of the task, stating that it's easy to throw around words like myth, ritual and ceremony. If theatre practitioners are not to fail in their efforts, Kerr feels that they must recognize the effort as entirely radical.

I am intrigued by Kerr's proposition, which still resonates for me today, that theatre practitioners need to look to religion to create their work, rather than setting up their work as a substitution for religion. However, I believe that there is a common core that can be found amongst audiences, that unity can and does exist between those of diverse beliefs. And I believe that the residual heartbeat, no matter how faint at times, that unites people is that of hope. And that hope is connected to heavenly theatre and the pilgrimage narrative, which I will discuss later.

Richard Schechner

Richard Schechner's *Performance Theory* seems to be the most detailed anthropological source on the relationship between ritual and theatre that is currently available. Originally published in 1988, it was revised and updated in 2003. In it, Schechner the writer, director, teacher, anthropologist, and editor, pulls from all his

experiences. Following I will summarise what he sees as the relationship between theatre and ritual, and how that is connected to his own attempts to create sacred theatre.

Firstly, unlike Kerr, Schechner states that there is no evidence of Greek tragedy coming from ritual. He sees it as a brilliant idea, but an idea nonetheless. Instead he writes that there are several activities related to theatre that all play a role in having shaped and influenced it over the years, and these are ritual, play, games, sports, dance and music. Furthermore, theatre is like many rituals inasmuch as whenever you gather a large group to watch a small group, it fosters celebratory and ceremonial feelings (Schechner 14). He argues that all too often theatre has been situated amongst literary genres, when actually it ought to be situated amongst performance genres, one of which is ritual. In an interesting insight to primitive cultures, especially in relation to some criticisms of Brook's work and Artaud's writings, Schechner feels that art is still trying to make the primitive man romantic in a neo-Rousseauian manner, stating that anthropologists have overcome this but artists still haven't. He sees some parallels between initiation ceremonies, which make past events present for an entire community, and theatre performances. He quotes the philosopher Eliade that, "the repetition of a ritual founded by Divine Beings implies the reactualization of the original Time when the rite was first performed" (Schechner 37). In this sense then, ritual becomes deeply performative, even evoking deity.

Schechner then examines at some length the overt theatrical practice of the rituals within the Elema of New Guinea with their Hevehe cycle in which huge masks and rhythmic dancing are employed. He points out, however, that these rituals are deeply effective and necessary acts in the tribe's peaceful existence, and that the ambition to

make theatre into ritual is nothing more than a wish to make performance in the Western world efficacious also.

In many of the rituals of various tribes he stayed with, Schechner saw symbolic events and actual events deeply intertwined. For example the Kurumugl of Papua New Guinea began one of their rituals in dance and aesthetics, and it culminated in the killing of hundreds of pigs for an offering to a neighbouring village. Relating this to Western theatre he writes, "This conflation of symbolic and actual events is missing from most aesthetic theater" (Schechner127). He believes that to compensate, and become more ritualistic, "Performance artists created 'actuals', home made rituals where changes [. . .] are sought. When artists, or their audiences, recognize that these staged 'rituals' are mostly symbolic activities masquerading as effective acts, a feeling of helplessness overcomes them. So-called 'real events' are revealed as metaphors" (127-8 Schechner). This desire to make Western performance efficacious leads to performance art which borrows heavily from ritual, sometimes becoming ritual in the process. Schechner seeks to outline this process of how theatre can develop from ritual, and conversely, how ritual can develop from theatre.

He points out how ritualistic tribal performances from various nations are now theatrical performances for tourists. This is certainly an example of ritual becoming theatre. But how does theatre become ritual? Schechner argues this is connected to the role society is asking theatre to fulfil. He writes:

> In a period when authenticity was, and is, increasingly difficult to define, when public life is theatricalized, the performer was asked to take off her traditional masks – to be an agent not of "playing" or "fooling" or "lying"

> (kinds of public masquerade) but to “tell the truth” in some absolute sense [. . .] Instead of mirroring the age performers were asked to remedy it. The professions taken as models for theater included medicine and the Church. (Schechner 131)

In relation to this Schechner referenced a time in the 1970’s when religious worship services from different Asian cultures were performed by adherents to those faiths at the Brooklyn Academy of Music for a paying audience. Of this experience he writes: “A defined interface between spectators and performers existed: on the one side was authenticity, efficacy, and ritual, on the other side was entertainment and theater” (Schechner 151). So here is an example of ritual becoming theatre. Schechner feels that Mass was still ritual and not theatre, even though it had a strong aesthetic dimension. This he felt was because “In ritual, staying away means rejecting the congregation, or being rejected by it [. . .] Ritual is an event upon which its participants depend, theater is an event which depends upon its participants” (137-8 Schechner). Schechner believes the history of theatre is a relationship between efficacious ritual and entertainment, the two being inter-woven. He sees contemporary experimental theatre as very much moving towards ritual, in an attempt to create what Turner called “spontaneous communitas”, or collective celebration wherein social boundaries have been dissolved. This is very much what Schechner himself was searching for with his company The Performance Group (TPG) through such productions as *Dionysus 69*. He feels further more that the move from theatre to ritual is related to this social bonding that happens when “the audience is transformed from a collection of separate individuals into a group or congregation of participants” (157 Schechner). The choice of words in “congregation” is telling, and it

seems to me that Schechner's view of ritualistic theatre is when the church and performance venue are collapsed into one, when people are simultaneously entertained, and also united as a group of worshippers. This ultimately seems to be what Schechner is seeking for in his own work. Regarding ritual he states that "… every strip, no matter how small, brings some of its former meanings into its new context. That kind of 'memory' is what makes rituals and artistic recombinations so powerful" (324 Schechner). Schechner feels that his theatre practice with the TPG was, "An attempt [. . .] to fill a niche abandoned by religion: solidarity, mutual supportive belief, gathering in the catacombs, etc" (221 Schechner). There is an irony here though, similar to Grotowski's work. Schechner is in effect seeking to fulfil the role of religion in a secular world (just as Kerr observed other practitioners were trying to do through theatre) but is using the tools of religious ritual to do it. I am lead to ask, is there a pilfering of the sacred in this, meaning borrowing sacred rituals in theatre for the inherent power Schechner acknowledges they have, but in ways that undervalue that sacredness? Is it the equivalent of a man I once met who took a prayer from the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem for his tourist souvenir? He had no qualms about this act, which I found so insensitive: this was pilfering of the sacred to me. Can theatre "borrow" too heavily from religious ritual, and what does that make of both the sacred ritual and the theatrical performance? I do not know the answer to this question, nor is it a direct accusation against Schechner's work, but I feel it is valid to ask.

Schechner sought to realise and utilise the power of ritual from its religious context into the theatrical context. This he did by inviting the audience to join in with the on stage ritual in order to create community, as in the well known *Dionysus 69*, and also

by having them literally become both the environment to and participants in the action of *Makbeth*. Schechner writes that to create such a community through ritualistic theatre is its own sacred and transcendental experience, and is the closest thing in the Western world to the positive aspects of communities in tribal culture (Innes 174).

Victor Turner

Victor Turner was an anthropologist who later in his life developed a self-confessed lively interest in experimental modern theatre. During the early 1950's, whilst studying the Ndembu tribe in Africa, his focus turned to ritual and rites of passage, and he subsequently enlarged upon Arnold van Gennep's theories on the latter of these. Van Gennep first categorized a rite of passage in 1908, seeing it as a transitional ritual accompanying changes of place, state, social position and age in a culture. Developing from van Gennep's theories Turner explored liminality, the transitional stages between phases in rites of passage. These writings on liminality brought international attention to Turner. Briefly speaking, liminality is understood as a state of "betwixt and between." In a rite of passage, it is the point of mid transition during it. When an individual is going through a rite of passage, they encounter cultural realms and experiences that bear little resemblance to anything they have known before. There are many attributes of liminality that I will be expounding more upon as it applies to pilgrimage in *King Lear*, but essentially it refers to the state of mid-transition that an individual goes through during a rite of passage. I will discuss this in greater depth, but for now will focus on how his work led him to utilise ritual in theatre.

One of the key ways in which Turner's work explored ritual was through his turning to theatre to find more effective pedagogical methods for teaching anthropology,

resulting in what he termed ethnodramatics. In his book *From Ritual to Theatre*, Turner outlines a process of turning ethnographies into play scripts, which he calls social dramas, rehearsing and performing them, and then finally studying them once again, now "armed with the understanding that comes from 'getting inside the skin' of members of other cultures, rather than merely 'taking the role of the other' in one's own culture" (90). He was actually inspired to pursue this avenue by Peter Brook's collaboration with Colin Turnbull on *The Ik*. In order to realise these ideas more fully he worked with Richard Schechner and a group of performers and anthropologists to stage two of his social dramas based on power struggles in Ndembu village life. Reading the results of this collaboration proves fascinating, as Ndembu rituals were improvised and recreated throughout an intensive two week workshop. Turner argues that ethnodramatics draws attention to the subsystems operating in cultures, which is of great value to anthropologists' work. Of this value he writes:

> We [anthropologists] will have to become performers ourselves, and bring to human, existential fulfilment what have hitherto been only mentalistic protocols. We must find ways of overcoming the boundaries of both political and cognitive structures by dramatistic empathy, sympathy, friendship, even love as we acquire ever deeper structural knowledge in reciprocity with the increasingly self-aware *ethnoi, barbaroi, goyim*, heathens, and marginals in pursuit of common tasks and rare imaginative transcendences of those tasks. (Turner, *From Ritual* 101)

For Turner then, theatre is an arena that allows people to transcend their own societal and cultural boundaries through performing others. It is anthropology as it should

be, focusing on "man alive" as he phrases it. Whilst Turner is perhaps the only one of the individuals I have looked at who doesn't seem to be overtly seeking sacred theatre, (though love of other peoples is certainly sacred) ritual does have a key role to play in Turner's vision of how this search for "man alive" is to be achieved. He explains,

> If we enact one another's social dramas, rituals and theatrical performances in full awareness of the salient characteristics of their original sociocultural settings, the very length and intensity of what Schechner calls 'the training-rehearsal-preparation process' must draw the actors into 'other ways of seeing' and apprehending the 'reality' our symbolic formations are forever striving to encompass and express.
>
> (Turner, *From Ritual* 18)

In comparison therefore, whilst Schechner used ritual to *create* a community with his audience, Turner looked to ritual to transcend the present community of the cast and audience, and build bridges to another culture and community: to see through their eyes. Indeed, Turner's efforts in his ethnodramatics seem to be encompassed by CS Lewis' observation that, "My own eyes are not enough for me, I will see through those of others" (Lewis 140).

This then is a concise summary of the most influential practitioners who have sought for something holy or sacred in their theatre, and how they went about that. It becomes apparent in their writings on sacred and holy theatre that narrative was not a primary consideration.

Pilgrimage Narrative

What I would like to propose is that one potential blue print for heavenly theatre, wherein deity in the form of the Holy Ghost is present, is pilgrimage narrative. As I have already mentioned, there are countless other components of heavenly theatre, including acting style, set, relationship with audience etc. To examine how those elements would need to combine to enable heavenly theatre is beyond the scope of thesis, though I will address it somewhat in the conclusion. Instead, I will focus on this first potential step in the desire to create heavenly theatre, that of pilgrimage narrative. I don't intend these insights to be prescriptive or didactic. If the definition of heavenly theatre is theatre that can invite the presence of the Holy Ghost, then it seems somewhat presumptuous to try and dictate too rigidly that which invites deity. However, I believe that there are principles that can cultivate heavenly theatre, which I will now explore.

It may appear that because my definition of heavenly theatre is so very specific and rooted within the LDS doctrine of the Holy Ghost, though it would be of interest and worth to Mormon theatre practitioners, it becomes too narrow to be of benefit to theatre practitioners who are not LDS. Though a valid concern, I believe pilgrimage narrative will be of great interest and worth to any one interested in the holy or sacred in theatre, or *King Lear.* Also, though my definition of heavenly theatre is deeply tied to LDS doctrine on the Holy Ghost, my exploration of pilgrimage narrative is through a more objective anthropological lens, lessening this concern.

What then is pilgrimage narrative, this possible first step towards heavenly theatre? In the Oxford English Dictionary, pilgrimage, closely associated with spirituality and religious worship, is expressed as a journey or long search with moral significance,

often to a place of religious interest. However, from the 14th century onwards, it also meant a journey, a period of travelling or wandering, or a period of exile. Also in the 14th century pilgrimage came to mean, most especially in Christianity, the course of the mortal life as a spiritual journey leading to heaven or a future state of blessedness. In using the term pilgrimage narrative, I do not wish to limit its meaning to any one of these three slightly different definitions. Instead I'd rather embrace all of them as being applicable elements of pilgrimage narrative.

Any research into pilgrimage always returns to Victor and Edith Turners' book *Images and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture,* published in 1978, and recognised as the first major anthropological study on pilgrimage. What I propose is an examination of *King Lear* in relation to their foundational writings on pilgrimage. This I hope will not only offer new readings into the play for those interested in *King Lear* in and of itself, but more importantly in relation to the concept of heavenly theatre, elucidate pilgrimage narrative inherent within that great tragedy.

Before doing that though, I need to examine the recent challenge to the Turners' work on pilgrimage. The most direct challenge to their insights has come from John Eade's and Simon Coleman's co-edited publication, *Reframing Pilgrimage: Cultures in Motion,* and John Eade's and Michael Sallnow's *Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage*. In these, they challenge the Turners' assertion that pilgrimage is an extraordinary event in people's lives. Others, including Eamon Duffy, agree with their challenge, stating that, "For many medieval Christians, going on a pilgrimage was, it seems to me, not so much like launching on a long journey to the ends

of the earth, as of going to a local market town to sell or buy geese or chickens [. . .] a local, not a liminal, phenomenon" (Morris and Roberts 166).

However, other pilgrimage writers continue to use the Turnerian paradigm and phrases in recent scholarship, seeing them as useful tools (Morris and Roberts 117-118). It seems that there is room enough still for the anthropological studies the Turners did on pilgrimage. Though some have come to challenge their work, actually there seems to be evidence for both sides, that historically pilgrimage has been a mixture of both local, ordinary affairs, and more extraordinary phenomenas, consciously taking people outside of their daily lives, the later of these being the Turnerian view. And it is pilgrimage as an affair outside of people's daily lives that has greater application to my concept of pilgrimage narrative, and in turn, its relationship to heavenly theatre.

What, then, were the Turners' findings on pilgrimage? In 1978, they published *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture,* an anthropological study. It is important to this study to highlight the fact that their findings relate to Christian pilgrimage. When the Turners first began their studies on pilgrimage, indeed the first anthropologists to study this phenomenon, they intended to compare the pilgrimage systems of several major historical religions. However, they soon realised that the study of Christian pilgrimage by itself was "an awesome task" and so narrowed their studies (Turners, *Image* XV). This led to a detailed look at several specific Christian pilgrimages. However, I will not be using their research in relation to specific pilgrimage sites, but instead the general observations they concluded about pilgrimage.

To begin with their definition of the term, the Turners identify pilgrimage as a rite of passage (Turners, *Image* 254), which they define as a transitional ritual

accompanying changes of place, state, social position and age in a culture (Turners, *Image* 249). Their simple definition of ritual, which I will use, is a transformative performance (Turners 244). To combine these definitions then, the Turners see pilgrimage as a transformative performance that accompanies the transitional changes of place, state, social position and age in a culture.

Their key observation is that pilgrimage shares many of the attributes of liminality in passage rites. As I explore *King Lear*, this notion of pilgrimage sharing the attributes of liminality will be important. In their writings, liminality is the state and process of mid-transition in a rite of passage, which is also seen as "betwixt and between". The individual, as I have touched on briefly, experiences cultural realms during their rite of passage that bear little resemblance to their prior knowledge. Being taken out of their familiar cultural environment via pilgrimage creates this "betwixt and between" sensation that the Turners refer to. In one of Victor Turner's books he describes liminality as, "literally 'threshold', movements betwixt and between the formerly familiar and stable and the not-yet familiar and stable [. . .] personal journey's in everyone's life from one brightly lighted familiar area (and set of habits) to another" (Turner, *Blazing* 132). In a more detailed description, he describes liminality as follows. Though a long quote, nearly every aspect of Turner's description of liminality has application to *King Lear*. Whilst I will be drawing the applications from Turner's findings to Shakespeare's tragedy in the next chapter, I would invite the reader to be thinking ahead as to how these attributes of liminality, and therefore pilgrimage, apply to *Lear:*

> Rites of passage in many cultures [. . .] have basically a tripartite processual structure…separation; margin (or limen); and reaggregation.

> The first and last speak for themselves; they detach ritual subjects from their old places in society and return them, inwardly transformed and outwardly changed, to new places. A more interesting problem is provided by the middle (marginal) or liminal phrase. A limen is a threshold, a corridor almost, or a tunnel which may become a pilgrims's road...Let us refer to the state and process of midtransition as "liminality"…Those undergoing it – call them "liminaries" – are betwixt and between established states of politico-jural structure [. . .] Out of their mundane structure context, they are in a sense "dead" to the world – and liminality has many symbols of death [. . .] Their structural "invisibility" may be marked not only by their seclusion from men's eyes but also by the loss of their preliminary names, by the removal of clothes, insignia, and other indicators of preliminal status [. . .] Against these emblems of death or limbo, other symbols and symbolic actions portray gestation, parturition, lactation and weaning. The novices at times may be treated as embryos in a womb, as infants being born, as sucklings and as weanlings [. . .] But the most characteristic midliminal symbolism is that of paradox, of being *both* this *and* that [. . .] as both living *and* dead, at once ghosts and babies, both cultural and natural creatures, human *and* animal. (Turner, *Blazing* 51)

Again, the Turners feel that pilgrimage shares the attributes of liminality given in this quote. I would argue that the Turners' research on pilgrimage, and their conclusions that pilgrimage is a liminal experience, meaning it encompasses the state and attributes of liminality, offers much to a reading of *King Lear*. Fundamentally, it shows how clearly

King Lear is a pilgrimage narrative, which I see as a stepping stone towards heavenly theatre. Also, Victor Turner observes that in pilgrimage, "One purifies oneself by penance and travel" (Turner, *Blazing* 16), also an important concept within *King Lear* that will be explored. This elucidates liminality then, one of their main terms I will be using. There are essentially three main phases to this liminality, though they may not follow each other in linear progression. They are, emblems of death, emblems of birth, and communitas, the latter of which I will now define

The Turners understanding of liminality in pilgrimage also encompasses communitas. In their research on Christian pilgrimage, the Turners observed that communitas played an integral role within the pilgrimage experience. Simply put, communitas is as, "a relational quality of full, unmediated communication, even communion, between definite and determinate identities" (Turner, *Blazing* 59). The Turners saw that communitas arose between individuals in liminality, and was characterised by lowliness, sacredness, homogeneity and comradeship, which ultimately led to healing and renewal. It could also be seen as an essential and generic human bond that was formed during pilgrimage (Turners 250). In Victor Turner's book *From Ritual to Theatre*, he writes:

> What then is communitas? Has it any reality base, or is it a persistent fantasy of mankind, a sort of collective return to the womb? I have described this way by which persons see, understand, and act towards one another as essentially "an unmediated relationship between historical, idiosyncratic, concrete individuals." For me communitas preserves individual distinctiveness [. . . It is] a direct immediate and total

> confrontation of human identities. It is has something ‘magical’ about it. Subjectively there is in it a feeling of endless power. Is there any of us who has not known this moment when compatible people – friends, congeners – obtain a flash of mutual understanding on the existential level, when they feel that all problems, not just their problems, could be resolved, whether emotionally or cognitive, if only the group which is felt (in the first person) as “essentially us” could sustain its intersubjective illumination. (48)

What the Turners have chosen to term communitas is essential to the pilgrimage narrative, and ultimately has implications for the eternal destiny of the Christian pilgrim. Finally, the Turners observed of communitas in pilgrimage that,

> Communitas strains toward universalism and openness, it is a spring of pure possibility [. . .] it is richly charged with affects, mainly pleasurable [. . .] Communitas is a fact of everyone’s experience, yet it has almost never been regarded as a reputable or coherent object of study by social scientists. It is, however, central to religion, literature, drama, and art, and its traces may be found deeply engraven in law ethics, kinship, and even economics. In the works of prophets and artists we may catch glimpses of the unused evolutionary potential of communitas. (Turners 251)

These two terms, liminality and communitas, are key to understanding the Turners’ anthropological studies on Christian pilgrimage, and so warranted the more detailed definition before going on to explore them in *King Lear.* However, there are other attributes of liminality and therefore pilgrimage that they noted, which perhaps

need less definition to be understood. It is worth quoting these final conclusions the Turners came to about pilgrimage in full, in order to get an overview of their findings, before I discuss how each of these elements are apparent within characters in *King Lear*. Again, though I will be going on in the next chapter to make the direct applications between *King Lear* and the Turners' findings, I would invite the reader to begin seeing how these attributes of pilgrimage are portrayed in the play:

> Pilgrimage, then, has some of the attributes of liminality in passage rites: release from mundane structure; homogenization of status; simplicity of dress and behaviour; communitas, both on the journey, and as a characteristic of the goal, which is itself a source of communitas, healing and renewal; ordeal; reflection on the meaning of basic religious and cultural values; [. . .] movement from a mundane center to a sacred periphery which suddenly, transiently, becomes central for the individual, an *axis mundi* of his faith; movement itself, a symbol of communitas, which changes with time, as against stasis, which represents structure and so forth [. . .] The liminal state has frequently been likened to death; to being in the womb; to invisibility, darkness, [. . .] and the wilderness. Liminars [one experiencing liminality] are stripped of status and authority, removed from a social structure maintained and sanctioned by power and force, and levelled to a homogeneous social state through discipline and ordeal. Their secular powerlessness may be compensated for by a sacred power, however – the power of the weak, derived on the one hand from the resurgence of nature when structural power is removed, and on the

other from the reception of sacred knowledge. (Turners 34 and 249 – 250)

This then is the Turnerian view of pilgrimage I have chosen to use when using the term pilgrimage narrative. Coming from the social sciences, it is a detailed, specific, and objective view of the attributes of Christian pilgrimage. Furthermore, and of great interest to me, their observations on pilgrimage could also be a literary critics overview of the protagonists' journeys in *King Lear,* as I will examine in the next chapter. Before doing that however, the salient question "Why *King Lear*?" needs to be answered.

King Lear

Out of all the play scripts that could potentially elucidate my concept of pilgrimage narrative within heavenly theatre, why *King Lear*? This text, perhaps more than any other, has taken me beyond myself, beyond my own everyday. Reading it is a transcendental and profoundly spiritual experience for me, a manifestation of the Holy Ghost. I have only had the chance to see *King Lear* once in a performance that I personally didn't enjoy for various reasons. However, my experiences in reading the play at least have lead me to the same place where my experiences of watching heavenly theatre have taken me. From this I conclude that *King Lear* has the potential to be heavenly theatre.[1] Others have experienced its transcendent power. Harold Bloom wrote that *King Lear* shows "an apparent infinitude that perhaps transcends the limits of literature [. . . it] announces the beginning and the end of human nature and destiny [. . .] a kind of secular scripture" (Bloom 467). William Hazlitt wrote about *King Lear*, "We wish we could pass this play over, and say nothing about it. All that we can say must fall far short of the subject; or even of what we ourselves conceive of it" (Bloom, *King Lear*

[1] It is not my intent to enter upon the old debate that Shakespeare is better read than staged. I don't support the claim, leading me to hope that what is heavenly theatre to read can be heavenly theatre when staged.

18). Eugene England, a Mormon scholar, saw *King Lear* not only as Shakespeare's greatest play (an opinion shared by many), but also "the greatest work of all literature" (England 38). In exploring the potential of pilgrimage narrative to lead towards heavenly theatre, my mind turns to *King Lear* because to read it is a wondrous and spiritual experience for me. And I want to know why. Undoubtedly, Shakespeare's language is a key. He was, first and foremost, a poet, and the richness of his script works on all levels as great poetry, echoing through every chamber of the soul. But I believe there is more to the greatness of *King Lear* than the language alone. The journeys the protagonists take in *King Lear* often follow the Turners' findings on pilgrimage, pointing towards a rich pilgrimage narrative embedded within the script. I believe this pilgrimage narrative, the architectural plan of heavenly theatre, is also what lends to the undoubted greatness of *King Lear*. This is a greatness that theatre practitioners and critics must seek to account for. Indeed, the critic Harold Bloom felt that "Criticism risks irrelevance if it evades confronting greatness directly" (Bloom 506). Elucidating the pilgrimage narrative within *King Lear*, and then examining how this functions as a stepping stone towards the play's greatness and potential as heavenly theatre, promises to throw light not only on the play itself, but on the pilgrimage narrative within heavenly theatre in a broader sense. Before my own exploration of this pilgrimage narrative within *King Lear*, however, I'd like to address how others have written about pilgrimage within this play.

Critical Writings on Pilgrimage in *King Lear*

Though various scholars have looked at the pilgrimage tradition in literature, very few have examined the pilgrimage tradition within theatrical scripts. In 2005 Philip Edwards' book *Pilgrimage and Literary Tradition* was published. One chapter focused

on Shakespeare's pilgrims. In this chapter he reviews Shakespeare's use of the term pilgrim or pilgrimage, or closely associated imagery, wherever it appears in any of his plays. Three pages are given to *King Lear,* focusing on Edgar's reference to his own pilgrimage when he reveals himself to his father. Though Edwards makes some interesting insights, the sheer scope of his book and the broad sweep of that particular chapter allow little depth of study into pilgrimage within *King Lear*.

There are two other books that look at pilgrimage in theatre, Ernest Ferlita's *The Theatre of Pilgrimage*, and Edgar Schell's *Strangers and Pilgrims*.[2] Ferlita defines "Theatre of Pilgrimage" as plays that acknowledge that the phenomenon of man is unfinished, and that the end will be different from the beginning. His concept of pilgrimage theatre is closely related to his understanding of linear time within the Judaeo-Christian tradition, as opposed to cyclic time in the Greek tradition. The Greek concept of time is as a circle, wherein mankind is caught in an eternal return, unable to ever break free from the past. However, the Judaeo-Christian concept of time is as a line, and "the past is the point of departure into a future always open" (Ferlita 3). He defines Theatre of Pilgrimage as a journey through linear time in which mankind searches for the answers to the great questions of mortal existence. This may be a literal pilgrimage or a metaphorical one. Ferlita considers eight plays in light of this definition, spending a short chapter on each, the first of which he looks at is *King Lear.* Through following the journeys Gloucester and Lear make he argues that the play ultimately asks the question, "What is the meaning of man, if he is born only to suffer and die?" (Ferlita 27). Ferlita concludes that while the play does not answer that question with any certainty, the door of religious

[2] I didn't actually find these books until I had completed my research and much of my foundational writing on heavenly theatre and the pilgrimage narrative.

faith is left open and it points towards man's desire to be like God (Ferlita 31).

Schell begins his exploration of pilgrimage in theatre by exploring Aristotle's ideas on an imitation of an action, believing that the five plays he explores in his book share similarities in the forms of their plots, and that they imitate significantly similar actions. The shared action is that man is a pilgrim journeying towards a goal he shares with other men, as opposed to an aimless traveller through time (Schell 13). That goal ultimately, as Schell identifies it in Christian tradition, is for mankind to seek his maker. However, this is only possible through the grace of God and the grace of nature that can bring wisdom through suffering. He examines five key plays that he sees as shaped by that pilgrim goal, *King Lear* being one of them.

In his analysis of *Lear,* Schell argues that the play actually subverts the pilgrimage narrative, through Cordelia's tragic death. He argues persuasively that the entire play points towards a peaceful ending, wherein all evil is punished and all goodness rewarded. When the promise of goodness being rewarded is subverted by the death of Cordelia, Schell writes that the play forces us to ask the question "Are the gods indifferent or malevolent?" (Schell 193). He concludes that the gods within the play offer no wages for virtue, and that *King Lear* marks the end of the dramatic moral allegory.

Both Ferlita and Schell, especially the latter, make some fascinating insights into the play, but reach remarkably different conclusions on the role of pilgrimage in *King Lear.* Ferlita concludes that the play leaves the door of religious faith open, and defends that point well, concluding that ultimately the play points towards humankind's desire to be like God. However, it is not possible to trace how he reaches this interesting conclusion. On the other hand Schell, who defends his conclusions more thoroughly than

Ferlita, sees the play as showing the divine silence of the gods towards rewarding virtue, and that this questions the moral underpinnings of society. In examining my research on pilgrimage in *King Lear* in relation to their works, it needn't be a comparative analysis of quality; their writings are of interest and worth. However, my research and insights on pilgrimage in *King Lear* are certainly different to theirs, due to my Turnerian view of pilgrimage. And furthermore, the larger issue explored in this thesis, namely the potential of pilgrimage narrative to lend itself to the creation of heavenly theatre, is distinct from their endeavours.

In conclusion, I have introduced my concept of heavenly theatre, namely theatre production that invites the presence of the Holy Ghost as defined within LDS theology. I examined the work and writings of theatre practitioners who have also sought for the holy or sacred in theatre, concluding that they focused on production values, and largely omitted narrative as a key component of the sacred. From this I stressed the importance of looking to narrative as the architectural plan for heavenly theatre, and introduced pilgrimage narrative, including the anthropological Turnerian lens I am approaching pilgrimage from. I have discussed why I have chosen to explore pilgrimage narrative in *King Lear* specifically, and finished with an overview of prior criticism on pilgrimage within *King Lear.* With this foundation in place, in the following chapter I will examine the pilgrimage narrative in *King Lear*.

Chapter Two - The Pilgrimage Narrative within *King Lear*

The entire play of *King Lear* is pilgrimage for certain characters. Those characters are Lear, Gloucester, and their children, Cordelia and Edgar. I will examine in this order how each of these characters under take pilgrimage, leading to the entire play being pilgrimage narrative. Though they undertake different types of pilgrimage, many attributes that the Turners observed apply to each of them. As such, the play *becomes* liminality; it explores the "betwixt and between" stage in the pilgrimage rite of passage, the transitional ritual accompanying changes of place, state, social position and age in a culture.

King Lear as Christian Paradigm

Before exploring their pilgrimage narratives, I would like to reiterate that the Turners' findings apply to Christian pilgrimage. This helps throw light upon the popular debate in *Lear* criticism as to whether this is a Christian or a pagan play. Though critics don't seem to clarify their definition of the word pagan, it seems to me they are using it to denote the lack of subscription to any major religion, most especially Christianity, as opposed to paganism as a religion founded on the worship of nature. Furthermore, the critics who see *Lear* as a pagan play also see it as nihilistic, offering little hope or redemption. To summarise the debate, there are those critics, like Harold Bloom, who are emphatic that *King Lear* is not a Christian, but pagan play (Bloom 476 - 516). Bloom is perhaps the most well known of the large contingency in the literary camp that argue for a pagan reading of this play. On the other hand, there are critics such as Peter Milward writing "If ever work of human literature breathed an intense faith in God, it is surely *King Lear*" (Milward 8). There are others who support him, such as Ernest Ferlita,

author of *The Theatre of Pilgrimage* that I have already reviewed in this thesis. I have sympathies to Bloom's reading of the play as pagan. I come from an educational background that has been implicitly sceptical of faith, which has influenced my reading of literature. I too find myself swayed to a pagan or existential reading of the play by Gloucester's line, "As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods; / They kill us for their sport" (4.1.37-38). [3] It seems to negate the heart of Christianity, of a loving God the Father who cares intimately for each human being. However, I cannot ignore the proliferation of religious references and parallels within the script. Though I will not site them all now, they are numerous, and I will investigate them as I explore characters' pilgrimage journeys. Suffice to say each individual must make their own conclusions on the pagan versus Christian reading of *King Lear.* The dialectics at work in the play, undoubtedly a source of great strength to it, seem to lend support to both camps. *King Lear*, being so richly written, allows individuals to bring their own world view to bear in reading it. However, I don't think it is possible to sit on the fence on this matter. At some point, each reader, critic, director or actor, indeed, anyone who genuinely faces the challenge of the greatness of this play, and wants to talk about it, must make their choice. And for me, my personal reading of the play is within the Christian paradigm. Undoubtedly my Christian faith influences me towards this reading, but it is supported from within the script by the numerous Christian references and parallels. Also there is nothing within *King Lear* that occurs that is fundamentally at odds with Christian teaching. By this, I mean that many critics have argued that the play couldn't possibly be Christian because the ending is so very bleak. Albany's line regarding Cordelia, "The gods defend her" (5.3.254), is followed immediately by Lear entering carrying the dead

[3] All quotes from *King Lear* are taken from the Penguin publication, cited in the Works Consulted.

Cordelia in his arms. Pagan readings of the play cannot reconcile that Cordelia is unrewarded and indeed punished, with Christianity. However, that very same ending scene has been read as Cordelia's fulfilment of her Christ-like role within the play: the child sacrificed as Christ was (Milward 39). Also, Christianity does not teach that God will always intervene to save good people, as Cordelia undoubtedly is, from the wicked actions of others: many of the early Christian disciples were martyred, and there was no divine intervention. In other words, the fact that Cordelia is unjustly killed is not in the least incompatible with Christian teaching, and may even be a parallel of Christ's death. The events of the play then are not at odds with Christian doctrine.

Also, within the script itself there are many references to Christianity. The readers who paganise the play rightly point towards the numerous pagan references also – the various gods Lear calls upon being but one example: "Away! By Jupiter, / This shall not be revoked!" (1.1.178-79). This creates a quasi-pagan setting, which cannot be refuted. However, the entire shape of the play, meaning its overarching pattern and forward movement, is deeply Christian, which I believe comes specifically from the pilgrimage narrative of the characters I will explore. Somewhere in the reading of the script, no matter how many times characters call on non-Christian Gods, the growing number of Christian references, the parallels between characters and Christ, especially in Cordelia, begins to over-power and colour the entire reading of the play. At least for me, this is the case.

Furthermore, this dichotomy in reading the play is both elucidated and resolved in the final scene. In other words, the final scene shows us why so many critics view it as a pagan play, but also resolves the question, as the Christian paradigm is actually affirmed

in the ending scene. Pagan readings of this play favour Lear's lines in the final scene to the dead Cordelia, "No, no, no life! [. . .] Thou'lt come no more; / Never, never, never, never, never, never" (5.3.303-6), stating that this is the summation of the play; an utterly bleak and nihilistic world. However, to focus on Lear's lines only, ignores the promise of the immortal soul in Kent's lines. The immortality of the soul is unequivocally confirmed in those final moments by Kent. Kent says of Lear, "Vex not his ghost. O, let him pass. He hates him / That would upon the rack of this tough world / Stretch him out longer" (5.3.311-13). He also adds, just after Lear has died, "I have a journey, sir, shortly to go. / My master calls me, I must not say no" (5.3.319-20). The journey Kent refers to here is certainly some sort of journey of the soul beyond death. When there have been so many Christian references and parallels through out the play, and the final scene confirms the continued journey of the soul after death, it solidifies the Christian paradigm this play is functioning in. However, it is problematic when a Christian reading of *King Lear* ignores or undervalues the sheer depth of Lear's, and the audiences', pain. Arthur Henry King, an LDS scholar coming from a Christian viewpoint in his writing, says regarding Lear's and Cordelia's reunion, "This reconciliation is the climax of the play. Nothing matters in the play after this scene. Does it matter really that Cordelia is hanged and Lear dies? With love re-established, we can face the death of Cordelia and of Lear not with equanimity, but with joy" (King 115).

Though this may be the case for him, it is not for me. Even reading the play within the Christian paradigm, as I do, I tremble at the ending. I weep. It is tragic and painful beyond description. For a Christian reading of the play to negate the tragedy and pain of Cordelia's death is to deny the disciples and Mary mother of Jesus their very real

pain at the foot of the cross on Calgary. Their grief and pain in that moment was real and terrible, as is Lear's. This ending is not the resurrection scene from *The Winter's Tale*, nor should Christian readings of the play try and make it such. Ultimately the final scene is deeply painful, but critically, it does not withhold redemption and reunion of loved ones after death. It just doesn't get round to showing it either. Within the Christian paradigm, it leaves the audience member at the foot of Calgary also, though with the promise that death is not the end. Therefore, the challenge is in being able to accept both these elements within the final scene, the tragedy and very real pain of Cordelia's death, coupled with a pointing forward to the soul's immortal journey. To focus solely on her death leads to a pagan, nihilistic reading; to focus solely on the immortal journey of the soul ignores the pain and suffering, and is equally an imbalanced reading. To embrace the two leads to a Christian reading that doesn't minimise Lear's, or the audience members', grief and suffering.

Whilst the main purpose of this thesis is not to further the debate between the pagan versus Christian reading of this play, it is nevertheless crucial to understand that my reading of this play is within a Christian paradigm. I will not seek to explicitly defend my position on this any further, though much of what follows does strengthen the Christian reading of this play as valid. Those points will be better addressed in the context of characters' individual pilgrimages. The fact that that the Turners' findings on specifically Christian pilgrimage are evidenced within so many characters in this play, as I will now demonstrate, strengthens my personal reading of this play within a Christian paradigm. I hope these thoughts offer additional insights into the ongoing debate for those who are interested in it. However, I am not exploring characters pilgrimages

through a Turnerian lens in order to prove my Christian reading of the play as valid, but rather to understand how pilgrimage narrative is embedded deeply within *King Lear,* one of Western literature's greatest treasures, in order to elucidate the potential of pilgrimage narrative as a starting point for heavenly theatre.

Lear's Journey as Pilgrimage

To begin exploring Lear's journey in this play, it is perhaps best to ask how it can initially be seen as pilgrimage. I would argue that Lear's journey follows the Turners' definition of a rite of passage and has "basically a tripartite processual structure [. . .] separation; margin (or limen); and reaggregation. The first and last speak for themselves; they detach ritual subjects from their old places in society and return them, inwardly transformed and outwardly changed, to new places" (Turner, *Blazing* 51). Briefly, in the opening scene Lear detaches himself from his crown, his position and authority in society; this is separation. From then onwards he is in liminality, until the anagnorisis scene with Cordelia. From meeting her until the end of the play he experiences a reaggregation, or coming together of himself, meaning a wholeness or emergence of the integral person Lear. From this brief overview it can be seen that his journey follows the overarching pattern of a rite of passage, but how then is this particular rite of passage pilgrimage?

Partly, the answer to that question lies in the opening scene, which points towards Lear's journey as a pilgrimage towards his own death. In the opening scene we have the division of the kingdom and the love trial. These can be read and understood on many levels, but one of them is as Lear's preparatory ritual before death. Lear says:

> Give me the map there. Know, that we have divided

In three our kingdom, ‘tis our fast intent

To shake all cares and business from our age,

Conferring them on younger strengths while we

Unburdened crawl toward death. (1.1.37-41)

Here Lear states that his very purpose in dividing his kingdom is to unburden himself before his own journey towards death. By the Turners’ definition, this act is a transitional ritual to accompany Lear’s change of social position in his culture, as he shakes, “all cares and business” from himself. The dividing of the kingdom is Lear’s preparatory rite of passage for death. How, then, is this “crawl” towards death connected to pilgrimage? The answer to the question lies in the following discussion on how Renaissance man prepared for death.

Carol Chillington Rutter, in her excellent work *Enter the Body: Women and Representation on Shakespeare’s Stage*, gives fascinating insights into preparation for death in early modern English culture. Part of this preparation for death was through *memento mori* (8-10), or reminders of death. Mary Queen of Scots wore a chain around her neck with a skull-shaped time piece. John Donne posed in his death shroud in advance of his death. Also the *portrait macabre* was popular, paintings showing the person healthy and well from one perspective and death’s touch upon them from another. These constant reminders of ones own impending death, the collecting of skulls for example, was just as popular amongst all sectors of society, and was not merely the pet of the aristocracy. This then was a culture wherein individuals actively sought to *remember* their own future deaths. Lear too is remembering and preparing for his own impending death, though not through the acquisition of physical reminders. Instead, he is actually

inversing the process of collecting *memento mori*, by *stripping* himself of his crown, as he says to Cornwall and Albany, “This coronet part between you” (1.1.139). However, the effects are the same as he is still reminding himself of and preparing for his own future death. Reading this play within the Christian paradigm, death, which people endeavoured to prepare for, was the gateway to the pilgrim’s final destination. Indeed, “The primary meaning of pilgrimage within Christian thought is concerned with the journey of individual believers through an alien world to the homeland of heaven” (Edwards 8). Lear’s “crawl” is a pilgrimage journey towards death, and he prepares for it in the first scene through his own inverted *memento mori*. Though the opening scene doesn’t point to the pilgrim’s journey beyond death, the last scene does, with Kent’s line: “Vex not his ghost. O, let him pass” (5.3.311). Thus Lear, in the opening scene, chooses to instigate his pilgrimage rite of passage towards death, his transitional ritual to mark his change of social position as king.

Lear’s pilgrimage towards his own physical death, which he initiates in the first scene, incorporates nearly every attribute of Christian pilgrimage that the Turners observed in their field work. In separating himself from his crown in the first scene, Lear is thrust into liminality, the “betwixt and between” stage in a rite of passage that I have discussed. Again, liminality is, “movements betwixt and between the formerly familiar and stable and the not-yet familiar and stable” (Turner, *Blazing* 132). Separated from his crown, Lear is in unfamiliar and unstable ground: liminality. There are three main phases of liminality, which can be summarised as emblems of death, emblems of birth, and communitas, though there are a few attributes of liminality and pilgrimage that fall outside of these three phases. In Lear’s pilgrimage, these phases of liminality are

generally linear, but at times they may be apparent in the very same moment. The Turners themselves saw liminality as encompassing both emblems of death, emblems of birth, and communitas, though they didn't term them as being phases. That is my own addition to their work. Just to review from chapter one, before exploring these characters' pilgrimages in detail, I will list the attributes of these three different phases of liminality, and any other attributes. To the Turners the "emblems of death" phase of liminality contains the sensation of "betwixt and between"; loss of name; removal of clothes and insignia; stripping of status and authority; removal from a structure maintained by power; invisibility; ordeal and physical suffering; darkness and wilderness. The Turners findings on the "emblems of birth" phase in liminality contain gestation; parturition and birth; lactation; suckling, weaning and being in the womb. Lastly, their findings on communitas are summarised as follows: communion between individuals; lowliness; sacredness; homogeneity; comradeship; simplicity of dress; healing and renewal; magical quality; problems resolved; illumination and an evolutionary potential. There are a few attributes of pilgrimage the Turners observed that fall outside of the phases of emblems of death, emblems of birth and communitas. Briefly, these are purification through travel; paradox; reflection on basic religious and cultural values, and lastly movement to a sacred periphery, or *axis mundi* of faith, leading to the reception of sacred knowledge. I will now explore how Lear encounters these Turnerian phases and attributes during his pilgrimage. These findings are primarily to evidence just how clearly *King Lear* is pilgrimage narrative. I will go on and examine how they apply to heavenly theatre briefly in the conclusions for each character. Making the applications from *King Lear* as pilgrimage narrative to heavenly theatre is easier done in these conclusions than

throughout the discussion, because the application to heavenly theatre requires an understanding of all the attributes of pilgrimage first.

Emblems of Death in Lear's Pilgrimage

The attributes of Lear's pilgrimage that I will explore in this section on the whole fall under the emblems of death phase in liminality. In order to differentiate between Lear's pilgrimage "crawl" to his own physical death and the emblems of death during liminality, I will always refer to his own death as his physical death. Unless I reference it as Lear's physical death, I am using the word in relation to the emblems of death apparent in liminality.

Lear's struggle to relinquish his role as king from the first scene onwards ties into the Turners' definition of the liminal state, which for them is, "likened to death [. . .] to invisibility, darkness [. . .] and the wilderness", all emblems of death. For Lear, the liminal state can be likened to death inasmuch as he is stripped of that which has been his life sustaining force: status and authority, as I will now show.

He is released from the mundane structure of kingship that has governed his life, a social structure that has been maintained by his own power, as he is stripped of his status and authority, all inherent components of pilgrimage in the Turners' findings. Indeed, Lear comes to realise:

> They told me I was everything. 'Tis a lie: I am not ague-proof [. . .]
> Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar? [. . .] And the creature run
> from the cur? There thou mightst behold the great image of authority:
> a dog's obeyed in office. (4.6.103-5 and 155-60)

This stripping of his status and authority is symbolised by his own literal stripping

away of his clothing when he meets Edgar disguised as Poor Tom on the heath. Indeed, from the opening scenes wherein Lear "splits his crown in two," we watch his authority and status diminish throughout the play. This stripping of both his crown and his clothing are emblems of death within liminality and pilgrimage that the Turners observed; the removal of insignia and clothes. He states that even though he is abdicating responsibility of leadership, "we shall retain the name and all th'addition to a king" (1.1.135-36). However, this proves to be a naïve fancy on his behalf, as that name and addition are stripped away, partly by his own foolishness in thinking such a thing possible, and partly by the malevolent intent of two of his daughters, who confer after Kent and Cordelia's rash banishment:

> GONERILL. If our father carry authority with such disposition as he bears, this last surrender of his will but offend us.
>
> REGAN. We shall further think of it.
>
> GONERILL. We must do something, and i'th'heat. (1.1.303-6)

In other words, Gonerill concludes that their father is carrying authority with "unruly waywardness" (1.1.297), when he has in theory surrendered it to them. Their mutual decision to "do something, and i'th'heat" is tantamount to committing themselves to an attack upon the authority he is still wielding. Kent, disguised as Caius, comments directly on Lear's authority also. Pretending not to recognise him as the king, Kent has the following exchange with Lear:

> LEAR. Dost thou know me, fellow?
>
> KENT. No, sir; but you have that in your countenance which I would fain call master.

LEAR. What's that.

KENT. Authority (1.4.26-30)

Whilst it could be seen as false flattery on Kent's behalf, he is shown to be in the opening scene a man of sincerity and integrity in his words. Furthermore, as Bloom points out, Lear is deeply loved by all the benign characters in this play (Bloom 479). If he is a king capable of eliciting such deep love, it seems reasonable that innate authority has played a role in who he is, and that such authority is visible in his very countenance, as Kent remarks, and not lost because he has passed his coronet onto his daughters. This is part of what is so troubling for Gonerill and Regan; he has given them his authority in word, and they are hungry for it, but he carries his authority in his person still. Thus, they unite to endeavour to strip him of it.

Evidences of this stripping of authority are many. Lear calls for dinner at Gonerill's home and none arrives and his questions are dismissed by Oswald (1.4.42-46). There are other evidences, but this piecemeal stripping away of his status and authority reaches a decisive pinnacle when Regan and Gonerill combine to challenge his need for his retinue:

GONERILL.Hear me, my lord;

What need you five-and-twenty, ten, or five

To follow, in a house where twice so many

Have a command to tend you?

REGAN. What need one? (2.4.257-61)

It is this most blatant attack upon him that sends Lear raving out into the storm, with the departing line "O Fool, I shall go mad!" (2.4.281). It could be argued that within

pilgrimage the stripping of status and authority that the Turners observed comes about through the individual pilgrim's own choice, unlike Lear's experience. However, Lear undoubtedly precipitated this disrobing of his authority with his opening declaration, " 'tis our fast intent / To shake all cares and business from our age, / Conferring them on younger strengths" (1.1.38-40). He seems unable to recognise that to rid himself of his kingly "cares and business" is precisely to rid himself of his own authority and status. Both the Fool and Kent understand that they are intimately connected, and point out Lear's folly to him before either Gonerill or Regan have done anything untoward to him in person:

> LEAR. Dost thou call me fool, boy?
>
> FOOL. All thy other titles thou hast given away; that thou
> wast born with.
>
> KENT. This is not altogether fool, my lord. (1.4.146-49)

And further on in the same scene the Fool says to Lear, "thou madest thy / daughters thy mothers; for when thou gavest them the / rod and puttest down thy own breeches (1.4.168-70). They both recognise what Lear cannot, that to have divided his kingdom and duties is to strip himself, through his own choice, of his status and authority. As the Fool points out to him, he makes his daughters his mothers, and inverts his status to that of dependent child in the process (perhaps Lear's initial reference to his "crawl" towards death pre-empts this child like inversion of roles the Fool refers to here?) Though Gonerill and Regan cruelly enjoy furthering this process, he is the one who enters the path of stripping himself of these things as he begins his pilgrimage towards death. In so doing, the liminal state Lear passes through in the play is symbolic of death, as the

Turners observed, because his innate sense of who he is, deeply interwoven with his kingly status and powers, is stripped away: there is a "death" of the former man Lear.

Liminality is also likened to invisibility, darkness and the wilderness by the Turners, and I will briefly explore how these elements are apparent in Lear's pilgrimage. Victor Turner observed of people in liminality that, "Their structural 'invisibility' may be marked [by] their seclusion from men's eyes" (Turner, *Blazing* 51). For Lear this "structural invisibility," of not being seen by men's eyes, is written into the very structure of the play: Lear vanishes from the stage from Act 3.6 until Act 4.6. This is almost an entire act of "invisibility" for Lear, in which Shakespeare secludes him from the audiences' gaze.

Furthermore, liminality is likened to darkness, and that is made manifest in Lear's pilgrimage. To begin, Lear is not in a literal darkness, but a symbolic one: "See better, Lear" (1.1.158) is Kent's cry to him in the first scene, and Lear's inability to see clearly is certainly a darkness of sorts. He is unable to discern, or see, Cordelia's sincerity and deep love for him from Gonerill and Regan's false flattery and lack of love. He is in darkness when it comes to seeing others truly. This darkness, or inability to see others clearly, is linked to invisibility, as the true nature of others is invisible to Lear. However, that symbolic darkness of not being able to see clearly soon becomes a literal one for Lear in the play. When Lear leaves Regan's home in fury at the way he has been treated by his two daughters, Gloucester says, "Alack, the night comes on and the bleak winds do sorely ruffle" (2.4.296-97). The point of it being night time is re-emphasised by Cornwall a few lines on: "Shut up your doors, my lord; 'tis a wild night" (2.4.303). This point is re-iterated in the coming scenes. Kent says of Lear out in the storm, "This night [. . .]

unbonneted he runs" (3.1.12-14). In the next scene Kent further states, "Things that love night / Love not such nights as these. The wrathful skies / Gallow the very wanderers of the dark / And make them keep their caves" (3.2.42-45). The emphasis on Lear being out in the darkness of night is continued by the Fool (3.4.75-76 & 3.4.106-7). Lastly, Edgar in disguise as Poor Tom replies to Gloucester's question to Lear, "What, hath your grace no better company?" by declaring, "The prince of darkness is a gentleman" (3.4.136). On a practical level, all these reference to night time and darkness may be seen as a necessary invitation to an Elizabethan audience watching this play in broad daylight to engage their imaginations. This still applies to an audience today watching scenes that of necessity have to be lit to some degree, but the language is a constant reminder that these scenes are taking place in the darkness of night time, and that they are not fully visible. Furthermore, through Edgar's line in referring to himself as the prince of darkness, another name for Satan, there is an age old parallel drawn between darkness and evil. This ties into the Christian pilgrims' eternal journey, which must be made through confronting darkness and evil: it cannot be avoided. I emphasise these constant references to night time and darkness to show how Lear's experiences encompass the attributes of liminality and pilgrimage, which the Turners likened to darkness. Lear goes from symbolic darkness to actual darkness during his pilgrimage.

Also, the Turners liken the liminality of pilgrimage to the wilderness. Lear's journey again exemplifies this likeness or parallel they observe. Lear spends a significant amount of the play's time, indeed from Act 2.4 until Act 4.7 on the heath, which is a wilderness. The heath is essentially a physical equivalent of "betwixt and between" in liminality. It is not the bastion of civilisation and society as embodied in various homes in

the opening two acts, nor is it Dover from the closing act, analogous to the Final Judgement in Christian thought, inasmuch as everything hidden in the play is revealed (Guilfoyle 58). The heath, or wilderness, represents this loss of familiar and stable structure, both familial and societal: betwixt and between.

Liminality, and therefore pilgrimage for the Turners, is "…likened to death…to invisibility, darkness…and the wilderness", all emblems of death. These likenesses are apparent in Lear's own pilgrimage towards his physical death, and begin to combine together to show just how clearly Lear's experience manifests the observations the Turners recorded on Christian pilgrimage.

Another aspect of the emblems of death phase that the Turners observe in liminality and pilgrimage is loss of name. This becomes apparent in Lear when he asks "Who am I sir?" and "This is not Lear. Does Lear walk thus, speak thus? [. . .] Who is it can tell me who I am?" (1.4.77 & 222-26). I discuss this crisis of self-knowledge that Lear experiences in greater depth further on in another context, but for now would like to point out that on one level, Lear experiences the loss of his name, a Turnerian attribute of pilgrimage.

Along with the stripping of status and authority, the likeness to death, invisibility, darkness and the wilderness, the Turners saw ordeal as central to the emblems of death phase in liminality, and therefore pilgrimage. The Turners do not define what they mean by the term ordeal, so I am using the Oxford English Dictionary definition: a painful, trying, and generally unhappy experience. Lear's ordeal begins when Cordelia answers "Nothing" to his love test. Though he passes through physical suffering as he faces the storm, his real suffering and pain is due to the tempest within his mind, which the storm

becomes symbolic of. As Lear observes to Kent, disguised as Cauis:

> Thou think'st tis much that this contentious storm
>
> Invades us to the skin; so tis to thee.
>
> But where the greater malady is fixed
>
> The lesser is scarce felt. Thou'dst shun a bear;
>
> But if thy flight lay toward the roaring sea
>
> Thou'dst meet the bear i'the mouth. When the mind's free
>
> The body's delicate; this tempest in my mind
>
> Doth from my senses take all feeling else
>
> Save what beats there – Filial ingratitude! (3.4.6-13)

Lear's ordeal then, as he sees it, is caused initially by his daughters. However, the main source of his suffering seems to mutate during the course of the play, away from how he has been treated by his daughters to how he has treated them, or at least Cordelia. In Lear's reconciliation scene with Cordelia, his pain seems to be caused by his recognition of his own guilt in how he has treated her. His first words to Cordelia upon awaking compare the condition of her soul to his own:

> You do me wrong to take me out of the grave.
>
> Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
>
> Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
>
> Do scald like molten lead. (4.7.45-48)

His ordeal then is caused firstly by others and then by his own self-recognition of the wrong he has done Cordelia. However, this self-recognition is also part of the healing process of communitas he has with Cordelia, which I will explore when I examine

communitas in Lear’s pilgrimage. The experiences Lear has that mirror the Turners’ findings on pilgrimage are not separate events but instead are interwoven, one experience, such as ordeal, being intimately linked to the requisite healing of communitas. Before I explore communitas though, I will look at the emblems of birth phase in Lear’s pilgrimage.

Emblems of Birth in Lear’s Pilgrimage

Victor Turner observed that, “Against these emblems of death or limbo, other symbols and symbolic actions portray gestation, parturition, lactation and weaning. The novices at times may be treated as embryos in a womb, as infants being born, as sucklings and as weanlings” (Turner, *Blazing* 51). I will now discuss these emblems of birth in Lear’s pilgrimage. Regarding lactation, suckling and weaning, there is much in Lear’s relationship to his daughters that inverts the norm of father-daughter relations, to mother-son relations. Being acutely aware of this inversion of roles, the Fool says to Lear, “thou madest thy / daughters thy mothers; for when thou gavest them the / rod and puttest down thine own breeches” (1.4.168-70). Lear inverts the natural order when he does indeed make his “daughters his mothers”. He puts himself in the vulnerable position of making them his care givers. Not only has he given Gonerill and Regan the “rod” of his authority, but he states, “Ourself by monthly course, / With reservation of an hundred knights, / By you to be sustained, shall our abode / Make with you by due turn” (1.1.132-35). Lear has given over complete responsibility of his own sustenance to his daughters, placing them in a mothers role towards him in a very literal sense. When he declares, “by you to be sustained”, there is a metaphorical reversion to the suckling babe by Lear, completely dependent upon the lactating mother for nurture and care. When Gonerill and

Regan in turn reject this role of nurturing and providing for him, as I have discussed, Lear goes through a painful weaning process of sorts. These are some aspects of the birthing emblems as the Turners observed them, played out in Lear's pilgrimage. The others I will now go on to examine.

The stripping away of Lear's clothing upon meeting Poor Tom is deeply symbolic of his stripping away of status and authority, an emblem of death. However, the same moment also carries important resonances to birth. The Turners felt from their field work that pilgrimage, in sharing many attributes with liminality, could be likened to death, but also to birth and being in the womb. Lear's liminal state in his pilgrimage can be likened to death inasmuch as he dies to his former prideful self. Yet as he strips himself of his clothing to be like Poor Tom, there are evocative connections to a return to the womb on Lear's behalf; a desire for re-birth. It seems to represent an attempt on Lear's behalf to be entirely free from societal bindings, by returning to his birth state. Judy Kronenfeld has explored how clothing and nakedness function in *King Lear* and within the culture for which it was written. She remarks that, "spiritual worth, innocence or a state of grace may be powerfully symbolized by nakedness" (Kronenfeld 20). Lear is, I would argue, desperately searching for those very things Kronenfeld identifies. He is looking for grace, as he swiftly realises his folly in the way he treated Cordelia, telling the fool before he meets Poor Tom, "I did her wrong" (1.5.24). His nakedness in part represents his desire for grace and innocence. Whilst grace does come to Lear, it is actually through his reconciliation with Cordelia, not through his return to his naked birth state.

In further emblems of birth, Lear's entire time upon the heath could be viewed as a time of gestation, development and growth, as well as encompassing emblems of death,

as I have already discussed. This is paradoxical. However, one of the main observations Victor Turner makes of liminality is precisely that: “But the most characteristic midliminal symbolism is that of paradox, of being *both* this *and* that…as both living *and* dead, at once ghosts and babies, both cultural and natural creatures, human *and* animal” (Turner, *Blazing* 51). In other words, it is a core attribute of liminality that Lear’s time upon the heath during his pilgrimage can simultaneously be emblematic of both death and birth.

Lear’s time upon the heath could be seen as gestation inasmuch as it entails personal growth. For now, in summary, his growth essentially is in learning to be compassionate to the poor. However, I will discuss that in greater detail as I explore the *axis mundi* he has upon the heath further on in this section. If Lear’s time upon the heath carries symbols of the womb, such as his stripping naked, and is a period of gestation, inasmuch as it entails personal growth, when is the symbol of parturition or birth? I would argue that this comes in Lear’s anagnorisis scene with Cordelia. In this scene he is dressed in new clothes, deeply symbolic of a re-birth, and wakes up a changed, humble, penitent man, saying, “You must bear with me. Pray you now, forget and / forgive. I am old and foolish” (4.7.84-5). Lear has, to use the Christian phrase, been “born again”. I will explore this important scene in greater detail as it relates to Lear’s communitas and healing, as the emblems of birth in liminality and healing in communitas are very much intertwined, but for now would like to emphasis that this scene is a re-birth for Lear. Birthing emblems are inherent to liminality, of which the Turner’s observed: “[Liminality…] is a threshold, a corridor almost, or a tunnel which may become a pilgrims’s road” (Turner, *Blazing* 51). Lear’s time upon the heath, as well as

symbolising the womb and gestation, is his journey through the metaphorical birthing canal of becoming this new Lear, humbled and penitent. And these emblems of birth in his pilgrimage are also connected to communitas, another Turnerian attribute of pilgrimage, which I will now explore.

Communitas in Lear's Pilgrimage

The Turners felt that communitas occurs between individuals in liminality, and is characterised by lowliness, sacredness, homogeneity and comradeship, which ultimately leads to healing and renewal. Communitas can also be seen as an essential and generic human bond (Turner 250). Though the Fool, Kent, Edgar and Gloucester are all devoted to Lear in their own way, and there is certainly an essential bond between them, I actually think that communitas for Lear is ultimately found with Cordelia towards the end of the play. However, the steps leading towards Lear's communitas with Cordelia begin out in the heath, wherein Lear begins to find lowliness and homogeneity.

Lear finds lowliness out in the heath through his *axis mundi*; when the heavens and earth seem to connect for Lear to teach him sacred knowledge. This *axis mundi* is a Turnerian observation that comes about when an individual moves away from the mundane centre of their lives to a sacred periphery, allowing this *axis mundi* to occur. Whilst the Turners did not see an *axis mundi* of an individual's faith as specifically connected to communitas, Lear's *axis mundi* leads to his lowliness and therefore communitas. This *axis mundi* occurs for Lear just before meeting Poor Tom, when for the first time his suffering leads his thoughts to turn to others. Lear says he will pray before he joins the Fool in the hovel, and offers the following:

> Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,

> That bide the pelting of the pitiless storm,
> How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
> Your looped and windowed raggedness, defend you
> From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en
> Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;
> Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
> That thou mayst shake the superflux to them
> And show the heavens more just. (3.4.28-36)

Lear's suffering has led him to feel charitably towards the poor, and it is one of the pivotal lessons Lear learns during his pilgrimage: empathy for the plight of "poor naked wretches", gained by his own first hand experience in the storm. These feelings of charity are part of Lear's preparation for communitas with Cordelia, as they help him find lowliness, which the Turners see as essential to communitas. Homogenization of status is also an element of communitas, and this lowliness and homogenization are connected in Lear's pilgrimage.

Immediately after finishing his prayer to the poor, Lear meets Poor Tom. As I have discussed, this moment symbolises Lear being stripped of status and authority, and also a return to his birth state. Furthermore this pivotal moment also represents a desire for homogenization on Lear's behalf; a desire of his to be like this "unaccomodated man" before him, leading Lear to declare, "Off, off you lendings! Come, unbutton here" (3.4.105). This homogenization of status with others, however, is not fully realised out in the storm with Poor Tom, as the Fool and Kent do not forget who Lear truly is, and treat him still as a king. Nonetheless, Lear has attempted to find equality of status, another

Turnerian attribute of communitas.

This lowliness and homogenization that Lear tries to find on the heath help prepare the way for the communitas he experiences with Cordelia, wherein he ultimately finds healing and renewal. This healing process began out in the storm, with Lear becoming aware of the plight of the poor through his own exposure and suffering, and culminates in the reunion scene.

After Lear has been found by Cordelia's forces, the doctor tells her that whilst Lear was sleeping, "We put fresh garments on him" (4.7.22). This is deeply emblematic of the healing and renewal process that Lear goes through when finally reunited with Cordelia. Having stripped himself of his clothing, these fresh garments represent this healing, which Cordelia seeks to offer through her kisses, saying, whilst he is still asleep:

> O my dear father! Restoration hang
> Thy medicine on my lips; and let this kiss
> Repair those violent harms that my two sisters
> Have in thy reverence made. (4.3.27-30)

This is communitas between the two of them, as they are united in a humility and lowliness that brings both of them to their knees in this scene. The stage directions from the folio call upon Cordelia to kneel when she kisses her father, and it is apparent that Lear tries to kneel at one point, prompting Cordelia to say to him, "No, sir, you must not kneel" (4.7.58). Though the stage directions for Cordelia can of course be ignored, the scene does exemplify lowliness. Also, the forgiveness and reconciliation inherent within the scene make their relationship sacred, another attribute of communitas. Arthur Henry King, who was a well respected LDS Shakespearean scholar, thought the scene to be

deeply sacred:

> I think it to be the greatest passage in all literature outside the gospel…You could almost place it near the parable of the prodigal son. This is an anagnorisis, a recognition scene…something most profound: it touches us deeply – more than anything else in the theater – because it is deeply associated with forgiveness and repentance. (King 113)

It is the forgiveness and repentance that lead to communion between Lear and Cordelia. The Turners do not define their use of the word communion between individuals during communitas, so I am taking it to mean religious and spiritual fellowship: the individuals experiencing communitas experience deep spirituality together. This forgiveness and repentance that Cordelia offers to Lear and which he eventually accepts, brings about healing and renewal, the end result of communitas.

Along with healing, the Turners observe that communitas solves problems and ultimately is evolutionary in nature. Both of these things are made apparent by Lear and Cordelia's communitas. Their difficulties and problems are indeed solved, with Lear exclaiming to Cordelia, "your sisters / Have, as I do remember, done me wrong. / You have some cause; they have not", to which Cordelia responds, "No cause, no cause" (4.7.74-77). This little exchange also highlights communitas' evolutionary nature. As the Turners do not define what they explicitly mean by this phrase, I understand it to allude to communitas' ability to help humankind evolve or mature into a higher, better state of living. This is certainly made evident by Cordelia and Lear's communitas, which contains the promise of peace, healing and love. Whilst not using the Turnerian term communitas, John Hughes in his excellent article *The Politics of Forgiveness: A Theological*

Exploration of King Lear writes most effectively about King Lear as a deep exploration of the political promise of forgiveness. He explores forgiveness (certainly a gateway to communitas) as a viable political ideology that is intrinsically necessary in the political domain, but often dismissed. He states that, "Forgiveness, far from being apolitical or anti-social, is nothing less than the ongoing business of society being born afresh" (282). Whilst Hughes does not use the phrase "evolutionary potential", that is what he affirms is possible because of forgiveness. It is also of interest that Hughes sees forgiveness as enabling society to be "born afresh". Forgiveness, which I see as embodied in communitas, does indeed lead to Lear being "born afresh" through his reconciliation with Cordelia, as I have already discussed. I will explore the implications of emblems of birth, death and communitas in Lear's pilgrimage at the end of this section, but will explore one more attribute of Turnerian pilgrimage that falls outside of these phases first.

Other Attributes of Lear's Pilgrimage

There is an attribute of pilgrimage the Turners observe that does not fall into the phases of emblems of death, emblems of birth or communitas. This is reflection upon basic religious and cultural values. Lear reflects upon these things during his pilgrimage by searching for answers to the most fundamental ontological question, what is man? Lear's exploration of this question actually begins through a crisis of self-knowledge.

It seems Lear's entire identity at the opening of the play is bound to his twin roles of father and king. As such, he experiences a crisis of identity when he perceives all three of his daughters rejecting him and he is stripped of his status and authority as king. This crisis of identity, a search for self, is made manifest by many of Lear's questions. Indeed, just as Poor Tom's refrain is "Tom's a-cold", Lear's refrain could be "Who am I?" Regan

introduces this idea directly when at the end of the first scene, she remarks about her father, “Yet he hath ever but / slenderly known himself” (1.1.292-93). Lear then asks Kent disguised as Cauis, in a tone of self-confidence in regard to his kingly position, “Dost thou know me, fellow” (1.4.26). In the same scene, with a sense of indignation at how Oswald has treated him, Lear asks the same question: “Who am I, sir?” (1.4.77). Again in the same scene, after Gonerill has confronted him about the behaviour of his retinue, Lear asks: “Does any here know me? This is not Lear. / Does Lear walk thus, speak thus? [. . .] Who is it can tell me who I am?” (1.4.222-23 and 226). This crisis of his identity, wherein he starts to turn these questions towards himself, leads him to declare towards the end of the scene, in defiance at Gonerill dismissing fifty of his followers, “Thou shalt find / that I’ll resume the shape which thou dost think / I have cast off for ever” (1.4.305 – 7). In a very literal sense though, through dividing his kingdom and duties, he has cast off his prior shape. This act precipitates his crisis of self-knowledge. If he is not now the king, who is he? Dressed in wild weeds and flowers, his crisis culminates in a madness induced self-parody of his former kingliness, when he answers Gloucester’s question, “Is’t not the King?” with “Ay, every inch a king. / When I do stare see how the subject quakes” (4.6.108-9).

How then does Lear’s crisis of self-knowledge, lead him to reflect on the meaning of basic religious and cultural values, a manifestation of pilgrimage the Turners observed? I would argue that this happens as his refrain “Who am I”, leads him to ask “Who or what is man?” In part, it is Lear’s search to know who he is that sends him raging out onto the heath during the storm. There he meets Edgar, disguised as Poor Tom. Upon seeing him, Lear observes:

> Is man no
> more than this? Consider him well. Thou owest the
> worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the
> cat no perfume. Ha! [. . .]
> Thou art the thing itself! Unaccomodated man is no
> more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art.
> Off, off you lendings! Come, unbutton here. (3.4.99-105)

Lear's reflection is furthermore an examination of cultural values because any given cultural paradigm is the reflection of a society's answer to that fundamental question, what is man? Lear is fulfilling a Turnerian attribute of pilgrimage in these questions: reflection upon religious and cultural values.

However, the fact that Poor Tom is Edgar in disguise makes Lear's reflections and conclusions upon "unaccomodated man" problematic. As Schell points out, the irony in Lear thinking he has found "the thing itself", man in his most natural state in Poor Tom, is that he is unable to recognise his own godson, Edgar. Schell concludes from this that the attempt to, "distinguish man's nature from the accommodating web of society that provides him with a peculiarly human identity, is a reductive illusion" (Schell 185). Though Schell's acute observation, that Poor Tom is Edgar in disguise, automatically challenges Lear's conclusions about the nature of man, the sheer power of the image of the old man's flesh exposed to the howling storm does in turn, I believe, over power the rational conclusions Schell reaches about this scene. When Lear declares that man is a "poor, bare, forked animal", and begins to strip himself down to that level, I am apt to

agree and think yes, man is no more than that! The theatricality of the moment, meaning its call to the power of visual symbolism, overpowers whilst not destroying Schell's remarks. The audience member is left torn in their reading of the scene, between concurring that man is a naked animal, but understanding that there is more going on in this moment because of Edgar's disguised state. This tension built into how to read it doesn't lead me to the very rational conclusions Schell makes, but instead invites me to ask the same question that Lear is ultimately asking: "What is man?" Thus Lear's crisis of identity, which sends him out into the storm, culminates in questions that reflect upon basic religious and cultural values, characteristic of pilgrimage as the Turner's noted.

Conclusions on Lear's Pilgrimage

I have explored emblems of death, emblems of birth, communitas and reflection upon basic religious and cultural in Lear's journey, all integral aspects of pilgrimage that the Turners observed. Victor Turner concluded that all of these elements combine in pilgrimage, leading him to state "One purifies oneself by penance and travel" (Turner, *Blazing* 6). This purification is what I will examine in my conclusions on Lear's pilgrimage, because Lear's pilgrimage parallels the Christian process of seeking purity from sin.

It is fascinating that the Turners saw Christian pilgrimage as liminality, and elucidated elements of death, elements of birth, and communitas within it, because these three phases of liminality are deeply embedded as metaphor within the discourse of being born again and becoming purified in Christianity. Within Christian doctrine, an individual must "die" to their former sins and self; emblems of death. Then they must be born again as a new creature in Christ; emblems of birth. Having undergone this process,

they must live Christ's commandment to "Love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15.12); which is, for all intents and purposes, communitas. These emblems of death and birth are made apparent in Christian scripture. Paul wrote in his letter to the Romans:

> Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him. (Romans 6.3-6)

Christian baptism then represents death and burial, as the individual is 'buried' with Christ and then resurrected with him. Furthermore John reports how Jesus and Nicodemus conversed about these matters:

> Jesus […] said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3.3-5)

Again, being baptised, or born of water, is paralleled with being born again. Having traced deeply the Turnerian emblems of death, emblems of birth and communitas in Lear's pilgrimage, I argue that Lear's journey follows this Christian pattern of dying to ones former sins, being born again, and going on to find deep love with others. Lear's

pilgrimage “crawl towards death” can be read as analogous to Paul’s “old man” dying with Christ; the death of the former man before walking in this newness of life. Lear’s pride in the opening scene, his folly in wanting to bribe his daughters into a competitive public show of their love to him, dies. This death of the former Lear leads ultimately to his healing as he is symbolical born again in his anagnorisis with Cordelia: “I am a very foolish fond old man [. . .] you must bear with me. Pray you now, forget and / forgive. I am old and foolish” (4.7.60 and 84-85). He finds communitas with her, a manifestation of Christ’s call to love one another.

This parallel, between Lear’s pilgrimage and the Christian journey of death of ones former self and being born again into a life of love, illuminates many things for us. One of these is that the attributes of pilgrimage, which the Turners saw as liminality, also trace the Christian person’s pilgrimage to Christ, not just their pilgrimage to a physical location. In other words, by seeing how their emblems of birth, emblems of death and communitas are played out in scripture surrounding baptism and being born again, it becomes apparent that their conclusions on physical pilgrimage stand true for the spiritual pilgrimage to the Christian’s heavenly home; the ultimate pilgrimage destination. Within that eternal journey, Christian scripture shows that emblems of death, emblems of birth and communitas are apparent. From this it can also be discerned that the Christian pilgrimage to heaven is liminality, embracing these phases of pilgrimage. Applying these thoughts to Lear’s pilgrimage that I have traced in detail, the following can be concluded: Lear’s journey manifests nearly every attribute of pilgrimage the Turners observed in relation to their studies on Christian pilgrimage. Furthermore, Lear’s pilgrimage parallels deeply the Christian’s journey to Christ, in as much as it shows the death of the former

self, being born again, and deep love: emblems of death, emblems of birth and communitas as the Turners termed it. On one level, this is all fascinating material for the on going debate of a Christian verses pagan reading of this play. On a more important level, the parallel of the Christian's journey to Christ in Lear's pilgrimage is key to pilgrimage narrative leading to heavenly theatre, theatre that invites the presence of deity in the form of the Holy Ghost as understood within LDS doctrine.

The pilgrimage narrative becomes a blue print for heavenly theatre inasmuch as it parallels this Christian journey to Christ. The pilgrimage narrative bears record of Christ teachings, because at a fundamental level it parallels Christ's teachings. I will now go on to explore Gloucester's pilgrimage narrative as it is played out in *King Lear*.

Gloucester's Journey as Pilgrimage

Whilst Gloucester certainly functions as a sub-plot to parallel Lear, he is also a fully rounded character, and his pilgrimage elucidates a central concern of *King Lear* that I will explore in the conclusion, that of empathetic feeling. I will examine Gloucester's pilgrimage in *King Lear* much as I did Lear's. Firstly I will explore which aspects of his journey are emblems of death as the Turners identified them, likewise with emblems of birth, and lastly communitas. I will then go on in the conclusion to examine how this pilgrimage journey enables Gloucester to recognise the need for feeling as others feel in order to have mercy towards them. I will relate this principle to the Christian atonement and suggest how this parallel between Gloucester's pilgrimage narrative and the atonement ties to heavenly theatre. However, I will begin by examining how and where Gloucester's pilgrimage really begins.

If Lear's pilgrimage begins with the division of his crown and accompanying

declaration of his “crawl towards death,” Gloucester’s pilgrimage begins when he chooses the path of moral action. This is the point in the play when Gloucester chooses to do that which he knows to be morally right, namely defend the king, regardless of the outcome. Until this point in the play, Gloucester feasibly could have become a morally bankrupt lackey, much like Oswald. However, Gloucester’s compassion and duty towards Lear lead him to choose this path of moral action. He tells Edmund that, “We must incline to the / King. I will look him and privily relieve him [. . .] If I die for it, as no less is threatened me, the King / my old master must be relieved” (3.3.12-13, 16-17). Gloucester is fully aware of the danger he is placing himself in through seeking the King’s welfare, and yet he still chooses to act. In committing himself to this course of moral action, he steps into the same arena as Christian pilgrims seeking to follow Christ and his teachings.[4] By this I mean there is a correlation between Gloucester’s choice to support the king, and the disciple’s choice to follow Christ: “And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me” (Matt. 10.38). Christ teaches in this scripture that his worthy disciples must choose to follow him, whatever the cost. They must, metaphorically speaking, carry their own cross, as they follow Christ. This is what Gloucester chooses to do when he follows Lear out into the storm in Act 3 scene 4. He chooses to follow his king and master whatever the cost, and this is where the parallel lies to the Christian pilgrim who chooses to follow Christ. Gloucester has deliberately chosen to ignore Regan and Cornwall’s advice to him to leave Lear out in the storm, and in so doing, fulfils the pilgrims ideal of following Christ’s teachings on compassion, as I will now explain.

Before Gloucester is tortured by Regan and Cornwall, they try to dissuade him

[4] This is in no way meant to imply that the moral arena is the domain of Christian pilgrims only.

from enabling Lear to find shelter from the storm outside. They urge Gloucester to, "Shut up your doors…Shut up your doors, my Lord" (2.4.299 and 303). Though they speak of him shutting up the literal doors of his home, the line is rich with New Testament association: "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John 3.17). The doors to Gloucester's home become deeply symbolic of bowels of compassion. Regan and Cornwall, who eventually become monstrous in the play, align themselves with shutting up their bowels of compassion towards others, through their urging Gloucester to "shut up" his doors. However, Gloucester doesn't "shut up" his doors, either of his home or his compassion, and his choice to follow Lear culminates in an interrogation from Regan and Cornwall.

During this interrogation scene, Gloucester states: "I am tied to the stake, and I must stand the course…I would not see thy cruel nails pluck out his poor old eyes" (3.7.53 & 54-5). And it is precisely Gloucester's choice to "stand the course", to follow and support Lear whatever the cost, that leads to his vicious blinding. This blindness leads to a very literal darkness, one of the emblems of death in Turnerian pilgrimage.

If Gloucester's choice to support Lear and follow the path of moral action parallels him with a pilgrim following Christ's teachings, how is this understood within the Turnerian definition of pilgrimage? Gloucester's choice to follow the path of moral action precipitates for him a pilgrimage that accompanies a change of place and social position within his culture, as the Turners observed. He is "thrust" out of his home, and his entire social position changes. When Gloucester chooses the course of moral action, he literally moves into the realm of liminality: "betwixt and between". The individual in

liminality experiences cultural realms that bear little resemblance to their prior knowledge. Once Gloucester is blinded and cast out into the heath to "smell his way" to Dover, this is certainly the case. The three phases of liminality, which shares attributes with pilgrimage, are apparent in Gloucester's journey, and I will explore each of them in turn: emblems of death, emblems of birth and communitas.

Emblems of Death in Gloucester's Pilgrimage

Like Lear, Gloucester experiences many Turnerian emblems of death during his pilgrimage. Specifically these are ordeal, darkness, wilderness, a stripping of status and authority, and being removed from mundane structure. I will trace how these emblems of death are apparent in Gloucester's journey, so that the pilgrimage narrative becomes evident, and so I can show in the conclusion how they lead Gloucester towards more empathic feeling.

Once Gloucester has chosen the path of moral action, he experiences great ordeal during his pilgrimage, of both physical suffering and mental anguish. He is tortured by Cornwall and Regan, blinded by them, and "thrust" out of his home. However, as with Lear, perhaps the greater anguish comes as he is told the truth about Edmund's treachery towards him, and he realises that he has misjudged Edgar: "O my follies! Then Edgar was abused, / Kind gods, forgive me that and prosper him" (3.7.90-91). He repeats similar cries of remorse in Act 4 scene 1, "O dear son Edgar, / The food of thy abused father's wrath! / Might I but live to see thee in my touch / I'd say I had eyes again" (4.1.21-24). As in Lear's situation with Cordelia, the deep love Gloucester has for Edgar is intrinsically connected to the deep pain he feels at having abused him, and seems to be the main source of his personal ordeal, more so than his blindness. His blindness is,

however, analogous to the darkness the Turners observed as being an emblem of death in liminality.

Perhaps more than any other character, Gloucester experiences the darkness that the Turners observed as akin to the liminal state experienced in pilgrimage. Indeed, all is, "dark and comfortless" to Gloucester after he is initially blinded (3.7.84). However, the more profound darkness that Gloucester experiences is not from his blinding, but from his despair.

Once Gloucester has been blinded and realised that he has abused Edgar, he is quickly overcome by despair, which manifests itself in his death wish. He desires oblivion through suicide, saying to Poor Tom:

> There is a cliff whose high and bending head
>
> Looks fearfully in the confined deep;
>
> Bring me to the very brim of it [. . .]
>
> From that place I shall no leading need. (4.1.72-77)

What began as a pilgrimage motivated by moral action becomes a pilgrimage motivated by despair. By despair, I mean that Gloucester has given up hope. Hope is an aspect of pilgrimage the Turners observe, stating that the atmosphere of pilgrimage is brought about by, "incalculable hopes that the religion's paradigms and symbols will restore order and meaning to a sad and senseless state of personal and interpersonal affairs – and from these hopes derives the pilgrim's proverbial happiness" (Turners 14). Gloucester is without hope after his blinding; he has no faith that from the "sad and senseless" state of his life, meaning and order can be restored. Gloucester's despair is darkness indeed. However, after Gloucester thinks he survives his leap from the cliff he begins to

overcome his despair. But it is not permanent. Towards the end of the play when Edgar, in disguise, tries to lead him by the hand to safety, Gloucester's despair creeps back. Sitting under the shadow of a tree, he finds out that Cordelia has lost the battle and says, "No further, sir; a man may rot even here" (5.2.8). His desire for oblivion returns in this moment, and it becomes clear that Gloucester's motivation vacillates between hope and despair during his pilgrimage. His despair is very much akin to the darkness of liminality; an emblem of death indeed for the suicidal Gloucester. Most of Gloucester's darkness, whether literal in his blindness or metaphorical in his despair, is experienced out on the heath, or wilderness. This wilderness is the next Turnerian emblem of death in pilgrimage that I will explore, and represents very clearly the state of liminality.

Gloucester's journey to Dover is time spent in the wilderness of the heath. Indeed, every character in this play who undertakes pilgrimage spends time in the wilderness. In this wilderness Gloucester, in the darkness of blindness and despair, is lead to what he thinks will be his death. His journey here is from his respected position as an Earl in what, under Lear, seemed to have been a stable hierarchical society, towards the great unknown of death. Thus the wilderness truly is liminality for him, as it is "betwixt and between the formerly familiar and stable and the not-yet familiar and stable" (Turner, *Blazing* 51). Gloucester is "thrust" out of all that is familiar and stable to him, and this release from mundane structure is another Turnerian attribute of pilgrimage, that is inherently connected to the wilderness.

Gloucester is simultaneously stripped of his status and authority and placed outside of the mundane structure of his life, both emblems of death that the Turners observed in pilgrimage. This stripping of his status and authority is made apparent by the

way he is treated by Regan and Cornwall. He is expelled from his own home by them, when they are there as his guests, with the most chilling of lines from Regan, "Go thrust him out at gates and let him smell / His way to Dover" (3.7.92-93). The entire structure upon which Gloucester has built his understanding of societal interactions is turned on its head. He pleads "Good my friends, consider / you are my guests. Do me no foul play, friends" (3.7.30-31). The mundane structure of Gloucester's society has been torn apart by the unleashing of the ferocious natures of Goneral, Regan and Cornwall, brought about by the division of the kingdom. Gloucester's being out upon the heath, or wilderness, is emblematic of his being outside of the structure of his society.

However, there has been a reversal of traditional roles and associations connected with the wilderness and society. They have switched places, or as Lear says, "handy-dandy", leading to the question which is dangerous, which is civilised? Traditional associations are that the wilderness is a place of danger, especially the danger of nature posed by savage animals, and that society is a place of safety and civilisation. However, the wilderness of the heath becomes the place where kindness is more readily manifested, and society's bastion of the home, in this instance Gloucester's, has become a place of cruelty, torture and danger. That compassion is indeed found upon the heath is made apparent in Lear's remarks of tenderness to the Fool "How dost my boy? Art Cold?" (3.2.68). Gloucester has been released from the mundane structure of his former society, which has actually reverted to animalistic savagery[5] under Gonerill, Regan and their husbands, to the wilderness, where compassion is manifest. I will now explore emblems of birth in Gloucester's pilgrimage, specifically those of being in the womb and

[5] This animalistic savagery is heightened by the constant references to Gonerill and Regan that liken them to animals. Indeed, the play is replete with these animalistic references, and they serve to compound this inversion of roles between the wilderness and society.

parturition or birth.

Emblems of Birth in Gloucester's Pilgrimage

There is a pivotal moment in Gloucester's journey that encompasses the emblems of death but simultaneously is emblematic of being in the womb and birth. This moment is when Gloucester throws himself forward, mistakenly thinking he is jumping from a cliff. Having leapt forward to what he thinks is his certain death, Gloucester's body lying on the stage becomes deeply symbolic of paradox, an attribute of liminality. It is a body in paradox because it is betwixt and between death and birth, hope and despair, the spiritual and the corporeal, and the comic and the tragic. His body in that moment, lying upon the stage, has accumulated the emblems of death I have already discussed: ordeal, darkness, wilderness, a stripping of status and authority and removal from the mundane structure of society. And yet Gloucester's body in that same instance encompasses emblems of birth, specifically being in the womb and parturition. How is this paradox so?

The vulnerable, blinded, grieving Gloucester, lying on the stage, is a Gloucester stripped of all and in the womb of suffering. From that womb he is on the brink of being born anew as a man prepared to bear affliction rather than seek oblivion from it. When Gloucester has thrown himself forward and is lying upon the stage it is a moment of profound choice for him. Having thought he would die, he lives still, and can now choose whether to embrace life or continue in despair. Edgar comes to him still in disguise saying, "Give me your arm. / Up – so. How is't? Feel you your legs? You stand" (4.6.65-66). This is the decisive moment for Gloucester, and he chooses to abandon his despair, saying "Henceforth I'll bear / affliction till it do cry out itself 'Enough, enough', and die" (4.6.75 -77). This represents a re-birth for Gloucester. Thus, the moment when

Gloucester’s body lies upon the stage encompasses the paradox of being emblematic of death and birth. The comically grotesque nature of the scene as suicidal parody points to the futility of seeking oblivion in order to avoid affliction in life. Instead, the weight of one’s own suffering and affliction must be carried, and it is made easier to bear by communitas, which Gloucester experiences with Poor Tom, as I will now go on to discuss.

Communitas in Gloucester’s Pilgrimage

Gloucester experiences initial steps towards communitas, that essential human bond with another, very briefly with the Old Man. The Third Servant who is going to help Gloucester by fetching flax and egg whites for his eyes cries out, “Now heaven help him!” (3.7.106). Even this kind gesture of wanting to help Gloucester has the seeds of communitas. The servant’s plea for heaven to help Gloucester is met by the Old Man at first. He leads Gloucester, and commits to bring his very best apparel for Poor Tom as Gloucester has requested, regardless of the dangers that poses for him (4.1.49-50). The lowliness and sacredness in the friendship and kindness the Old Man expresses to Gloucester have the seeds of communitas. Quite simply, there is a magical quality to this Old Man’s evident concern; his compassion is as an oasis of human kindness in Regan and Cornwall’s desert of indifference and cruelty.

However, the Old Man’s seeds of concern and kindness are replaced by Edgar’s deep love, and communitas begins to grow. One of the results of communitas the Turners observed was healing. In his role as Poor Tom, Edgar helps his father heal from his despair. As I have already discussed, this healing begins after Gloucester's “leap” from the cliff, when he states: “Henceforth I'll bear / Affliction till it do cry out itself 'Enough,

enough', and die" (4.6.75-7). Further on in the scene he prays, "You ever-gentle gods, take my breath from me. / Let not my worser spirit tempt me again / To die before you please" (4.6.216-18). Edgar helps lead his father to this healing, and even refers to his care over his father's miseries as "nursing them" (5.3.179). Furthermore, Edgar says when he has lead Gloucester to what he thinks is the cliff's edge, "Why I do trifle thus with his despair / Is done to cure it" (4.6.34-5). Through Edgar's very own language here, he paints himself as the nurse and care giver to Gloucester, seeking to cure him from his ailments, specifically his darkness of despair. The healing from despair does come for Gloucester, and Edgar's tender love for him leads to it.

However, there are critics who see no healing through love, or communitas, in *King Lear.* Harold Bloom, for example, writes in his book *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*, that familial bonds of love in this play lead to pain, and not healing at all:

> Shakespeare's intimation is that the only authentic love is between parents and children, yet the prime consequence of such love is only devastation [. . .] Love is no healer in *The Tragedy of King Lear*, indeed, it starts all the trouble and is a tragedy in itself [. . .] What the drama of King Lear truly outrages is our universal idealisation of the value of familial love [. . .] The play manifests [. . .] a compassionate despair as to the mutually destructive nature of both paternal and filial love [. . .] love itself becomes identical with pain. (Bloom 483-5)

I disagree that love brings no healing in this play. When Lear and Cordelia meet again in Dover great healing takes place, as has been discussed. Furthermore, there is healing for Gloucester from his despair, though he does vacillate a little. To dismiss the

healing of these parents, due to the love and communitas they experience with their children, is to misread the play. Healing does occur, as does tragedy. However, in relation to Gloucester's healing it is unclear why Edgar doesn't reveal himself to his father sooner.

This question of Edgar revealing himself to his father is ironic in Gloucester's communitas with Edgar. Though Edgar helps his father heal from his death wish, later on, when he eventually reveals himself to him, the mixture of anguish and joy leads Gloucester's heart to "burst smilingly" (5.3.196). This off stage conversation that Edgar reports, wherein he tells his father of his own "pilgrimage" and seeks his blessing, is perhaps the pinnacle of Gloucester's communitas with Edgar. It not only sounds sacred, a Turnerian attribute of communitas, but the off-stage conversation is paralleled to the communion that Lear and Cordelia experience, because it is an anagnorisis. The healing and communion that Gloucester experiences with Edgar are not the only Turnerian attributes of communitas; there is also homogenization.

Initially Gloucester sees himself as superior to some and inferior to others. However, eventually there is homogenization of status as he experiences communitas. The opening lines of the play present a Gloucester who is proud and boastful of his sexual exploits and confident in his social standing. He plays the social equal to Kent, and the social inferior to Lear. Indeed, there is a marked contrast in his language when Lear enters the scene and addresses him, to which Gloucester answers with the deferential, "I shall my liege". He is rash in his judgments of Edgar, playing the role of jury, judge and executioner, to both him and those who harbour him, and commanding his servants brusquely, "Pursue him, ho! Go after!" (2.1.42). He is sure of his world and

his role within it, and it is a world of ranking in which he is inferior to some but superior to others. However, once he has been blinded and thrust out of his own home, Gloucester, stripped of status and authority, recognises his homogeneity with others (other than the king, whom he still reveres as his superior in status). For example, at the opening of Act 4 Gloucester gives a command to the Old Man who has helped him, and then adds, "Do as I bid thee, or rather do thy pleasure" (4.1.47). He seems to check the commanding voice of his former self and acknowledge his oneness with the Old Man: he is no longer socially superior to others. Gloucester's experience of communitas then, whilst perhaps not as profound as Lear's at first glance because Gloucester's anagnorsis is off stage, is still evident.

Conclusions on Gloucester's Pilgrimage

I have traced how Gloucester undergoes pilgrimage, which is instigated by his moral action in supporting and defending Lear. This thrusts him into liminality, and he experiences many of the Turnerian attributes of pilgrimage, including the phases of emblems of death, emblems of birth and communitas. What conclusion then can be drawn from Gloucester's pilgrimage? In much the same way as Lear's pilgrimage ultimately parallels Christ's doctrine on being born again, Gloucester's pilgrimage also parallels fundamental Christian theology. This theology is the nature of Jesus Christ's atonement. Gloucester's pilgrimage narrative teaches him that people must allow themselves to feel as others feel in order to perceive situations clearly and ultimately have compassion and mercy towards people. This is the foundation of the Christian atonement, that Christ allowed himself to feel all the range of human emotion, pain and suffering, in order to know the human condition fully and ultimately be able to extend compassion and

mercy to everyone. I will explore how this is played out in Gloucester's experience and how it parallels Christian theology.

Prior to Gloucester's pilgrimage of moral action he relies purely upon his immediate senses, and consequently never once questions Edmund's lies, his forged letter or self inflicted wound. Only through Gloucester's pilgrimage of moral action does he recognise his false perception. Indeed, he says to the Old Man out in the storm after his blinding, "I stumbled when I saw" (4.1.19). Gloucester begins to perceive clearly now, ironic as he is devoid of his physical sight. He starts to rely more upon his empathic feelings towards others, and it is his pilgrimage narrative that leads him to this. Much as Lear dies to his former proud self and is born again to deep love, so it is for Gloucester. As he experiences the emblems of death in pilgrimage he dies to his former self. The boastful Gloucester who rashly misjudged both of his sons is no more through the emblems of death, such as ordeal, darkness, removal from mundane structure etc. Instead, through the emblems of birth in his pilgrimage, there comes a more humble Gloucester, capable of perceiving others clearly because he is capable of feeling. It could be argued that this suggestion of Gloucester learning greater empathy for others through his pilgrimage is a false one, because he had empathy enough for Lear's plight that actually instigated his pilgrimage. Whilst it is true that those seeds of compassion and empathy for others were within Gloucester before his pilgrimage, it is his pilgrimage journey, beginning with his choice to act morally towards Lear, that enables them to grow and develop. Before his pilgrimage of moral action, even if these seeds of empathy are within Gloucester, they bear him no fruit until he makes a conscious choice to follow Lear. And in following him, and undertaking his pilgrimage, Gloucester says he now sees the world

"feelingly" (4.6.148-50).

What does Gloucester mean by this? How can he see *feelingly*? The answer to this is the heart of King Lear for me; the eye of the storm. I would argue that Gloucester's ordeal in the emblems of death phase of pilgrimage, his suffering, has lead him to empathetic feelings towards others, and that is how he sees "feelingly". There are two key instances that support this reading of Gloucester's use of the word "feelingly" as being empathy towards others.

The first is when he is about to be led to Dover, when he says in prayer to the heavens:

> Let the superfluous and lust-dieted man
>
> That slaves your ordinance, *that will not see*
>
> *Because he does not feel*, feel your power quickly!
>
> So distribution should undo excess
>
> And each man have enough (4.2.66-70 italics added).

Here, Gloucester aligns this not seeing the situation of others, in this instance poverty, with not having empathetic feelings: the poor persons' suffering is neither seen nor alleviated because there is no compassionate feeling towards him from the rich man. Indeed, the rich man in Gloucester's prayer abuses God's law of compassion towards the poor, "that slaves your ordinance." Gloucester clearly shows in this prayer, a parallel to Lear's prayer for the poor, that the feeling he deems necessary is to feel for the situation or plight of others, which is empathy.

There is another example of Gloucester showing the need for empathy. When the Old Man is leading him blinded onto the heath, they come across Poor Tom. The Old

Man confirms that he is a madman and beggar, to which Gloucester replies, "He has some reason, else he could not beg" (4.1.31). This is a small moment, but one that points towards Gloucester's growing empathy and concern for others. His response to this beggar man, his son in disguise, is a charitable and empathetic impulse.

Both of these moments support my reading of Gloucester's line, "I see it feelingly", as an admission that in his blinded state, he now knows the world through his empathetic feelings towards others. Through empathetic feeling, he sees more clearly than he did with sight alone, as he "stumbled" when he saw. And it is ordeal and suffering, darkness and wilderness, the experience of the emblems of death during pilgrimage, that lead him to this empathetic honest perception, as he was certainly lacking such clear perception in the opening of the play. He has learnt empathy through his suffering. As Marden Clark observed of the characters in *King Lear*, "the very suffering, the horrors they experience, redeems or regenerates the characters; they are significantly better after the experiences than before - and better *because* of the experiences - even though the experience may destroy them" (Clark 134). This applies to Gloucester, whose suffering and pilgrimage lead him to empathy, and betters him. Gloucester's experience of ordeal and suffering leading to empathy mirrors the Christian doctrine of the atonement. Eugene England argued that Shakespeare was exploring the atonement in *King Lear* (England, *The Church* 40), and agreeing with his perception, I see Gloucester's experiences as integral to that exploration of the atonement. I will now explain the Christian, specifically Mormon concept of Christ's atonement so that I can draw this parallel to Gloucester's experience.

By atonement I mean the role Christ played to reconcile, redeem or bring

humankind back into God's presence. Within Christian doctrine, Adam and Eve were in God's presence in the Garden of Eden, but once dismissed from that place, an advocate was needed to reconcile imperfect humans to a perfect God. Christ is that advocate, someone to intercede on a person's behalf, and ultimately pay the price for their sins. Christ, through his suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane, crucifixion and subsequent resurrection, became capable of paying the price for an individual's sins. Christ became capable of saving all others by allowing himself to feel as they felt, so that he could have compassion and empathy towards them. This "feeling as others feel" out of love for them, the compassionate, empathetic impulse, is what Gloucester learns, and it is the very heart of Christian theology, as it is the heart of the atonement.

Scriptures within the LDS faith highlight that Christ suffered for others out of love for them so that he could have mercy upon them, empathy for them in their humanness, and ultimately save them, as the following verse from *The Book of Mormon* shows:

> And [Christ] shall go forth suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and sicknesses of his people [. . .] and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succour his people according to their infirmities [. . .] the Son of God suffereth according to the flesh that he might take upon him the sins of his people. (Alma 7.11-13)

Christ took upon him every feeling and pain so that he could be in a position to

succour, meaning to aid and help, his people. Without first feeling people's pain, the verse implies, Christ could not have mercy for them. Gloucester recognises this correlation between feeling as others feel, and empathy and succouring, when he offers his prayer for the poor, wherein the rich man will not succour the man in poverty because he will not allow himself to feel empathy for him. Two other verses of scripture show how willing Christ is to feel as humans feel, whether through corporeal, emotional or spiritual suffering:

> And lo, he shall suffer temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst and fatigue, even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death; for behold, blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people. (Smith, *Mormon*, Mosiah 3.7)

And from another book of scripture called the *Doctrine and Covenants*:

> For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent [. . .] Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit.(19.16-18)

These verses find remarkable parallels in Lear's prayer for the poor. (Though this section is the conclusion for Gloucester's journey, so fundamental is the importance of "feeling as others feel" in order to have compassion and pity, that it actually becomes a refrain in the play, with others characters building upon the same important principle.) When exposed to the storm Lear declares:

> O, I have ta'en
>
> Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;

> *Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel*,
>
> That thou mayest shake the superflux to them
>
> And show the heavens more just (3.4.32-36 italics added)

Lear's tirade parallels the Christian doctrine of the atonement. He states that people must feel what others feel to enable them to have compassion and mercy. In these last two verses of scripture, Christ is the ultimate exemplar of being prepared to suffer what others have suffered so that he could extend mercy to them. It is perhaps the ultimate form of mercy, namely to experience their suffering for them, so that they might not suffer. Taken all together these scriptures portray a God who felt as people feel, and suffered for them out of mercy and love. This is summarised by Paul in the New Testament, who wrote in his epistle to the Hebrews:

> Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4.14-16)

The relationship between feeling and mercy are intimately connected by Paul in this verse of scripture. He argues that Christ, in having felt humankind's infirmities, is able to give mercy. Paul shows us that within the Christian Atonement there is ultimately no mercy, forgiveness or redemption without Christ first feeling all the gamut of human pain and suffering. And in *King Lear*, the very same principal is taught, namely that within human relations mercy comes after feeling as others feel. Though this is taught

most specifically through Gloucester's pilgrimage, which is why I am examining it in this section, it is a principle reinforced by other characters also, namely Lear and Edgar. This is through Lear's prayer to the poor, which I have already discussed, but also through one of Edgar's lines. Edgar replies to Gloucester's question "What are you?", with, "A most poor man made tame to fortune's blows, / Who, *by the art of known and feeling sorrows*, / Am pregnant to good pity" (4.6.220-23 italics added). Edgar here states that through feeling sorrows, he has greater pity, or empathy, towards others. These other characters' insights serve to strengthen this parallel, between what Gloucester learns about seeing the world "feelingly", and the atonement. Furthermore, similar parallels have actually been observed between Gloucester and Christ.

When Gloucester remarks that he sees the world "feelingly", it is the summation of aspects of the script that parallel him to Christ. Cherrell Guilfoyle argues for some of these resonances between Christ's experiences and Gloucester's, especially as Christ was portrayed in the cycle plays. She draws parallels between Gloucester's torture and blinding and Christ's blindfolding when he was taunted and buffeted (Luke 22.64), and how, in the Towneley cycle for example, grim details of Christ's torture were represented on stage. She furthermore sees symbolism between Gloucester's attempted suicide and Satan tempting Christ to throw himself from the pinnacle of the Temple (Guilfoyle 56-58). These resonances culminate in Gloucester's observation that now he sees the world "feelingly". From the scriptures I have examined, the same is true of Christ; that he too could be said to have seen the world "feelingly". These resonances between Gloucester and Christ serve to heighten and strengthen the parallels between the play's repeated emphasis upon the need for empathy and the doctrine of Christ's atonement. In other

words, it is not only the message that finds parallels, but the messenger also.

In conclusion, there is a clarion call within *King Lear* that in order to exercise compassion and mercy, people need to empathetically feel as others feel. Gloucester's pilgrimage, especially those Turnerian attributes of pilgrimage that were emblematic of death, such as ordeal, darkness, wilderness etc., fostered his empathy for others. Ultimately, Gloucester's pilgrimage experiences as I have outlined, lead him to declare of the world, "I see it feelingly", and it is this empathy for others that parallels Christ's atonement. And it is in this parallel to Christ's atonement, found through Gloucester's pilgrimage narrative, that the promise of heavenly theatre lies. The repeated emphasis in *King Lear* on the need for the feeling, empathetic, charitable impulse, as manifest specifically by Gloucester's pilgrimage, parallels both Christ's teachings and his atonement. As the Holy Ghost's role is to bear record of Christ and his teaching, Gloucester's pilgrimage narrative lends itself as blue print, or stepping stone towards heavenly theatre, because embedded within his pilgrimage narrative are profound parallels to Christ and his teaching. In the next section I will examine Cordelia and Edgar's pilgrimage's within *King Lear* through the Turnerian lens, but I will explore their journeys together, because they share remarkable parallels with each other. I will explore how both of their pilgrimages are essentially as Christ-figures within this play, with each of them reaching out to "save" their fathers.

Cordelia and Edgar's Journeys as Pilgrimage

Both Cordelia and Edgar's pilgrimages show them to be Christ-like saviour figures to their fathers in *King Lear.* I will trace how their experiences encompass the Turners findings on emblems of death, emblems of birth and communitas in pilgrimage,

and in the conclusion show how their Turnerian pilgrimage narratives are connected to their roles as types for Christ. And it is in their Christ like roles that their pilgrimage narratives lend themselves to heavenly theatre. Before tracing the Turnerian attributes of pilgrimage in their narratives however, I will examine how and why their pilgrimages begin.

Cordelia's pilgrimage is a pilgrimage of love, and she declares as much in her very first line of the play. After hearing Gonerill's opening speech of effervescent love for Lear, Cordelia's first words are, "What shall Cordelia speak? Love, and be silent" (1.1.62). For all intents and purposes, this is what Cordelia goes on to do for the rest of the play. She is off stage after this opening scene until Act 4 scene 4, which is silence indeed, but simultaneously, there are constant reminders of her profound love for Lear. These come most especially from the Fool and Kent, but also from the Gentleman Kent speaks with in Act 4 scene 3. I will explore these constant reminders of Cordelia's profound love for Lear in another context below, but for now would like to establish that Cordelia's pilgrimage is motivated by love for Lear. That is what I mean by hers being a pilgrimage of love. The reason for all of her choices, from her responses to Lear, to her reaction to Burgundy, are all motivated by her understanding of the true nature of love. She says to Burgundy, after he has chosen not to marry her without her dowry, "Peace be with Burgundy! / Since that respect and fortunes are his love, / I shall not be his wife" (1.1.247-9). And in further evidence of love being her motivating force for all she does, when she reappears in Act 4, scene 4, in preparation for battle against her sisters, she declares, "No blown ambition doth our arms incite/ But love, dear love, and our aged father's right" (4.4.28-29). But how is this love a pilgrimage? I believe the answer to that

question lies in the fact that the depth of Cordelia's love leads her to become a saviour for her father, and in so doing parallels her with Christ. Cordelia's journey is inherently pilgrimage because she parallels Christ so clearly in her saving love towards her father. This is the ultimate act of Christian pilgrimage, to be Christ-like in relationships with others. Indeed, Christ taught, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13.35). Through such deep, redemptive love for her father Cordelia is in the realm of Christian discipleship, and as such pilgrimage. For Cordelia, this pilgrimage is not to a location, but instead is the concept of mortal life as a spiritual journey to Christ. When the play opens, she is already firmly on that pilgrimage path, in contrast to Edgar, who chooses to start his pilgrimage during the course of the play.

Edgar's pilgrimage begins with the lines "Edgar, I nothing am" (2.3.21), wherein he renounces his identity as Edgar to become the "basest and poorest shape" (2.3.8) of man, in the form of Poor Tom. Whilst Lear's pilgrimage is towards death, Edgar's is to self-abnegation, in the cause of self-preservation. He says "Whiles I may 'scape / I will preserve myself" (II.3.5-6), and he does this *through* making Edgar nothing and becoming Poor Tom. However, it is valid to ask how his journey of self-abnegation is pilgrimage?

Perhaps most importantly, Edgar actually perceives his journey as pilgrimage. When relating how he revealed himself to his father, he states: "I asked his blessing, and from first to last / Told him my pilgrimage" (5.3.194-95). Edgar sees his experiences from his banishment until he reveals himself to his father as pilgrimage. And furthermore, just as Gloucester parallels Lear in the subplot, Edgar parallels Cordelia, as

he too becomes a saviour figure to his father. As well as Edgar referring to his own journey as pilgrimage, it is also in this role as saviour that Edgar's self-abnegation becomes pilgrimage. Before examining Cordelia and Edgar's parallel roles as Christ-like figures however, I will examine their pilgrimages through the Turnerian lens.

Emblems of Death in Cordelia and Edgar's Pilgrimage

Though both Cordelia and Edgar experience some of the attributes of emblems of death during their pilgrimage, only Edgar could be said to be in liminality. He is "betwixt and between" from the moment of stripping down to become Poor Tom and for the remainder of the play. Disguise is inherently liminal, as it renders the one in disguise "betwixt and between" their former selves and their disguised selves. Disguised as Poor Tom, Edgar is in liminality, embodying Victor Turner's observation that, "the most characteristic midliminal symbolism is that of paradox, of being *both* this *and* that…as both living *and* dead, at once ghosts and babies, both cultural and natural creatures, human *and* animal" (Turner, *Blazing* 51). Edgar as Poor Tom points towards these paradoxes in his soliloquy when he commits himself to the path of self-abnegation. In this speech, pointing towards the paradoxical role of being human and animal, he states that he will, "take the basest and most poorest shape / That ever penury, in contempt of man, / Brought near to beast" (2.3. 7-9). Also, when his father sees him in disguise, he makes Gloucester "think a man a worm" (4.1.33). Furthermore, in this disguise Edgar embraces the paradox of being both a cultural and natural creature, as the audience know he is the son of a nobleman, but his dress and appearance are that of a madman and beggar. The fool points to the paradox of being both dead and alive, as when he very first meets Poor Tom, he exclaims "Come not in here, nuncle; here's a spirit [. . .] A spirit, a

spirit!" (3.4.38-41). This paradox between Poor Tom being dead and alive, human and animal, cultural and natural, to name but a few, is reiterated throughout the play, and reinforces Edgar's liminality.

However, for Cordelia, though she does experience some of the attributes of liminality, she doesn't seem to inhabit the full liminal sensation of being "betwixt and between". She does travel from one cultural realm to another, namely France, and is taken outside of her familiar environment in the process, both liminal traits. However, she never really seems to be "betwixt and between" in her own sense of self-hood. I suspect this is because of her constant, unwavering love for Lear, and so integral is that love to who she is that, ultimately, she is never really "betwixt and between" within herself.

However, she does experience some, though not all, of the attributes of liminality, even if she is never fully experiences liminality. Those attributes of liminality that she experiences, along with Edgar, are being stripped of status and authority, being outside of the mundane social structure, invisibility and ordeal, as I will now explore.

Both Edgar and Cordelia are stripped of their former status and authority by being banished by their parents. Cordelia does become the Queen of France, giving her both status and authority, but before being taken in by the King of France, she is stripped of all by Lear, bar her dignity. Edgar likewise is banished by his father, and stripped of all. Furthermore, Edgar takes this stripping of all status and authority even further, when he decides to take on the form of Poor Tom. He seeks protection in the absolute "basest and poorest shape" of man; freedom from all of his former status, authority and societal ties. Stripping himself of his clothes and insignia, emblems of death the Turners observed, symbolises this loss of status and authority. Furthermore, Edgar strips himself of his own

name, as he acknowledges when he says, “Know, my name is lost” to Edmund. This loss of name in pilgrimage is another Turnerian emblem of death in liminality.

This stripping of status and authority for Edgar, taken to its extreme degree when he becomes Poor Tom, takes him outside of his mundane social structure. Indeed, as Poor Tom, feigning madness and abject poverty, he places himself so far beneath anyone else in a society founded on hierarchy, that he is removed from his society’s normal structure. At one point during his pilgrimage he implies that he has placed himself so very far beneath others, outside of societal echelons, so that nothing else can hurt him. He states:

> Yet better thus, and known to be contemned,
> Than still contemned and flattered. To be worst.
> The lowest and most dejected thing of fortune,
> Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear.
> The lamentable change is from the best;
> The worst returns to laughter. Welcome, then,
> Thou unsubstantial air that I embrace!
> The wretch that thou hast blown unto the worst
> Owes nothing to thy blasts. (4.1.1–9)

Cordelia, on the other hand, doesn’t try to remove herself from society in order to preserve herself, as Edgar implies here, but instead is outside of the mundane structure of her society because of her profound love. From the first scene onwards, she is shown to be in direct contrast to her sisters, and outside of the realm of feigned flattery. She is banished for it, an act symbolising that her deep, honest love cannot be accommodated in the social structure of vain flattery of Lear’s creation. Being outside of their social

structure is inherently connected to invisibility and ordeal for Cordelia and Edgar, two further attributes of liminality that they share.

Cordelia's invisibility is very literal, as I have discussed. She is absent from the stage for the vast majority of the play, far from the eyes of the audience and the eyes of the protagonists in the play. Edgar's invisibility comes from taking on the shape of Poor Tom. He becomes invisible, not even recognised by his own father and godfather, Lear, in his feigned guise as madman and beggar. And in their invisibility, they also suffer ordeal. For both of them, their ordeal is predominantly caused by seeing their fathers suffer at the hands of others.

Cordelia has profound misgivings about how her father will be treated by her sisters from the very opening of the play, saying to them:

> Love well our father!
>
> To your professed bosoms I commit him.
>
> But yet, alas, stood I within his grace,
>
> I would prefer him to a better place. (1.1.271-74)

Her premonition is realised as her sisters go on to abuse Lear, causing Cordelia great ordeal and suffering. Indeed, Cordelia says herself that her only real pain comes from how Lear is treated. For example, when her French army has been beaten and herself and Lear taken prisoner by the ruthless Edmund, she says to her father, "For thee, oppressed King, I am cast down; / Myself could else out-frown false Fortune's frown" (5.3.6-7). Her concern is always for Lear, and her degree of suffering and ordeal intimately connected to his degree of suffering. Her ordeal, caused by her father's plight, is also made apparent when the Gentleman reports to Kent how she took the news of her

father's treatment by her sisters:

> Faith, once or twice she heaved the name of father
>
> Pantingly forth, as if it pressed her heart,
>
> Cried 'Sisters! Sisters! Shame of ladies! Sisters!
>
> Kent! Father! Sisters! – What, i'the storm? i'the night?
>
> Let pity not be believed!' There she shook
>
> The holy water from her heavenly eyes,
>
> And clamour moistened; then away she started
>
> To deal with grief alone. (4.3.26–33)

Cordelia's ordeal is grief, caused by her fathers suffering at the hands of her sisters. For both her and Edgar, their ordeal is the fruit of their compassion and love for their fathers; if they didn't love them so very much, they wouldn't grieve for them. For Edgar, his ordeal likewise is caused more by his father's suffering than by his own banishment.

When Edgar sees Gloucester after his blinding, he says, "My father, parti-eyed! World, world, O world! [. . .] I am worse than e'er I was" (4.1.10 and 27). Whatever suffering he has experienced through his banishment and self-abnegation, it is intensified so very much because he sees his father's pain. These emblems of death for Cordelia and Edgar, especially their ordeal caused by the suffering of their parents, leads them to become saviours to them, as I will discuss in the conclusion. There are, however, some attributes of pilgrimage, emblems of death to the Turners, which Edgar experiences but Cordelia does not. These are darkness and the wilderness.

Edgar's darkness and experience of the wilderness are interconnected. His

darkness is the physical darkness of the stormy night, and his wilderness is being out upon the heath. When the Fool first finds him, indeed, when the audience first see him fully transformed into Poor Tom, he emerges from the darkness of the cave or hovel he has been trying to shelter in. This darkness and wilderness for Edgar, emblems of death in pilgrimage, are paradoxically emblems of birth also. This is because as Edgar experiences ordeal, darkness and the wilderness of the heath, he goes through a gestation and birthing process.

Emblems of Birth in Cordelia and Edgar's Pilgrimage

Edgar's gestation and birthing process is apparent when comparing his almost jocular naivety in his first appearance in scene 1.2 when he greets Edmund, to his final lines of the play. That innocent, trusting, naively childlike Edgar is replaced by a world weary man. His final speech which closes the play shows him as such: "The weight of this sad time we must obey; / Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say" (5.3.321-22). What has lead to this change in Edgar? I would argue that his ordeal and his experience of the other emblems of death in his pilgrimage have lead to a new Edgar. This new Edgar has been born from his loss of innocence about the nature of suffering in the world.

Edgar has internalised the sobering truth that life can always get worse; that no matter how much suffering an individual is exposed to, their suffering can intensify. He expresses this realisation when he sees his blinded father for the first time:

> O gods! Who is't can say 'I am at the worst'?
>
> I am worse than e'er I was.
>
> And worse I may be yet. The worst is not,

So long as we can say 'This is the worst'. (4.1.26-29)

This knowledge shapes and changes Edgar, and becomes a part of who he is. He has felt and internalised the weight of the knowledge he has gained, that one can never say of life, this is as bad as it will get. A new Edgar has been born from the womb of suffering.

However, for Cordelia, though she too suffers, there doesn't seem to be a process of re-birth for her. Instead, any Turnerian emblems of birth in her pilgrimage revolve around her mothering role towards her father, Lear. While there are no explicit lines in the text that make Cordelia a mother figure to Lear, her actions towards him warrant the parallel. She tries to find him when he is lost; she worries over him, seeks to heal him, calls doctors for him, and tends and nurses him in his sickness. Whilst these are the natural manifestations of deep familial love, they are also all actions closely associated with mothering. In other words, Cordelia's love is the womb that births Lear anew. This deep love for him is also what enables communitas between them. As I have discussed both Lear and Cordelia's communitas, and Gloucester and Edgar's communitas already, I will not re-examine that element of pilgrimage now, pointing my reader back to the section on communitas in the discussion on Lear and Gloucester. Suffice to say, between both sets of father and child, there are the Turnerian attributes of communitas during pilgrimage, namely communion, lowliness, sacredness, healing and renewal. However, this communitas between them also embodies the Christ-like role that both Edgar and Cordelia have towards their fathers that I will now consider.

Conclusions on Cordelia and Edgar's Pilgrimages

The pilgrimage experiences that Cordelia and Edgar have, encompassing emblems of death, birth and communitas, show them to be Christ figures in the play, who

in deep love for their fathers reach out to save them.

Edgar relates his experiences of helping his father to Albany with words that make him a Christ figure in the play: “Met I my father with his bleeding rings [. . .] became his guide, / Led him, begged for him, saved him from despair” (5.3.87-89). Christ came to lead, guide and beg for intercession on behalf of the spiritually blind, just as Edgar says he did this for his father in his blindness. Both Christ and Edgar, in the process, save those in their charge from despair. Edgar acknowledged that this was his intent when he said of his father, “Why do I trifle thus with his despair/ Is done to cure it” (4.6.34-35). Christ, on the other hand, saves individuals from the despair of sin and death, by taking upon himself their sins.

Furthermore, in this parallel between Christ and Edgar, Christ condescended, or voluntarily lowered his rank, from one of great power before he was born, to the humble and lowly position of a babe born in a manager. This is expressed in St. John in the first chapter, wherein the Word is understood as Christ: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God…And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1. 1 and 14). Christ condescended and suffered for those very people who sought his death, as the hymn by Karen Lynn Davidson expresses it: “The very foes who slay him have access to his grace”[6]. Likewise Edgar condescended and knowingly served the very person who had sought his death, his father. Edgar’s condescension was an integral part of his pilgrimage experience, encompassing a stripping of status and authority, removal from the mundane structure of society, loss of clothes and name, and indeed his experience of darkness and the wilderness. All of these Turnerian emblems of death which Edgar experienced in his pilgrimage, as discussed,

[6] See hymn 197, LDS Hymnbook: *O Saviour, Thou Who Wearest a Crown*

brought about Edgar's condescension which he maintained whilst saving his father. This parallels Christ's condescension. Also, during this saving condescension, Edgar, like Christ, had "not where to lay his head" (Matt. 8.20).

In his self-abnegation, therefore, Edgar plays a Christ figure towards his father, and it is in his role as Christ figure that his pilgrimage lies. His "Edgar, I nothing am", followed by his Christ-like role towards his father, resonates with Jesus' teaching, "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 10.39). In becoming a Christ figure to his father through his self-abnegation, Edgar's journey automatically justifies his reference to it as pilgrimage, as he fulfils the quintessential role of the Christian pilgrim, namely to follow Christ's example. Cordelia likewise not only follows Christ's example in her role as caregiver to her father, but even more so than Edgar, becomes a type for Christ in this play.

Many critics have seen Cordelia as the most Christ-like figure in the play, and as I discussed for Edgar, I would argue that it is in this role that her pilgrimage lies. As I discuss her role as a Christ-like figure in the play, I will try to elucidate how deeply intertwined it is with her experience of the Turnerian attributes of pilgrimage.

In the first scene of the play, France says, "Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich, being poor, / Most choice, forsaken, and most loved, despised" (1.1.250-51), dialectics which carry echoes of Christ's role on earth. He, too, was most rich, being poor, most choice, forsaken, and most loved, despised. Though I didn't highlight this point when discussing Cordelia's pilgrimage, the Turners see paradox as an essential attribute of pilgrimage, and Cordelia is shown to encompass paradoxes that tie her to Christ from the opening scene. However, there are lines that are far more overt in paralleling Cordelia to

Christ.

When she hears news of her sisters' forces coming towards her in battle, she exclaims, "Oh dear father, it is thy business that I go about" (4.4.24-25). This is a fairly direct reference to Jesus' reply to Mary when they lost him in the Temple, "wist ye not that I must be about my father's business?" (Luke 2.49). It is her great love for her father, that leads to their communitas, that prompts her to be about her "father's business."

Another direct parallel in the script that ties Cordelia to Christ is when the Gentlemen, talking to Lear, says, "Thou hast one daughter / Who redeems nature from the general curse / Which twain have brought her to" (4.6.205-7). In the context of the play, Cordelia is seen by the Gentlemen as the force to redeem them from the curse brought about by Lear's two other daughters, Gonerill and Regan. However, the line also has reference to Christ, who "…hath redeemed us from the curse of the law" (Gal. 3.13). Just as Christ saves mankind, the Gentleman sees Cordelia as the kingdom's saviour. This is connected to her mothering role to Lear, during the Turnerian emblems of birth phase in her pilgrimage. I have discussed how Cordelia's actions to Lear are all emblematic of motherhood, and the Gentleman wants her to fulfil the same role for their entire kingdom. And he uses language that directly parallels her to Christ in order to express that. Just as Cordelia enables Lear to be born anew, healed from his suffering at the hands of Gonerill and Regan, the Gentleman looks to Cordelia to birth the kingdom anew, redeem it, and heal it from Gonerill and Regan.

The Gentleman's remarks here set Cordelia up as a Christ-like figure of hope to others in the play. As well as the Gentleman's hope that she will "redeem" them, Kent takes hope, courage and solace from her letter to him (2.2.164-68). Christ too, was a great

figure of hope, as Paul expressed when he wrote to Timothy, "our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope" (1 Tim 1.1). The hope others place in Cordelia is intimately connected to her role as healer. I discuss Cordelia's ability to bring healing and renewal to her father, both Turnerian attributes of communitas, when discussing Lear's communitas. When seeking to heal Lear, Cordelia pleads, "Restoration hang / Thy medicine on my lips; and let this kiss / Repair those violent harms that my two sisters/ have in thy reverence made" (4.7.27-30). In her role as healer, essential to communitas, Cordelia is once again paralleled with Christ, who went about, "healing all manner of sickness" (Matt. 4.23). Her desire to heal is the manifestation of her great love for Lear, and the nature of that love also parallels her with Christ.

Eugene England writes that Cordelia's great love for Lear is the same love that couldn't yield to flatter or pander to his pride. Her great love for him means she speaks the truth. It is, after all, Cordelia's honesty in expressing the nature of her love to Lear that initiates the redemption process in him. England explains:

> But it is precisely the love that is redemptive, by being both tough and sacrificial, the love embodied uniquely in Christ, that Shakespeare is exploring in this drama…a love that would try to actually redeem someone, rather than merely humor or accommodate him, must first be direct and uncompromising, even harsh. (England 39–40)

Therefore another parallel between Cordelia and Christ in this play is an uncompromising love which doesn't seek to flatter others in their folly, as Gonerill and Regan did Lear. It is Cordelia's "tough" love, as England terms it, which leads to her repetition of "nothing" to her father's questioning in the opening love trial. Though Cordelia speaks in this scene,

it nevertheless creates resonances between Cordelia and Christ, who, under trial by Pilate, "answered him to never a word" (Matt. 27:14). And it is this honest love of Cordelia's that ultimately leads to Lear's renewal, which is an essential Turnerian attribute of communitas. However, Lear struggles at first to accept this renewing, redemptive love. And in his struggle to accept it, Cordelia is again paralleled with Christ. This is because there is a parallel between Lear accepting Cordelia's love when they meet again in communitas, and the sinner accepting Christ's unconditional love. Lear says to Cordelia when they are reunited:

> LEAR. If you have poison for me I will drink it.
> I know you do not love me, for your sisters
> Have, as I do remember, done me wrong.
> You have some cause; they have not.
> CORDELIA. No cause, no cause. (4.7.73-77)

Lear's struggle here is to accept Cordelia's unconditional love. His struggle to accept her love is also manifest when he first arrives in Dover, and avoids seeing her, as Kent relates it:

> A sovereign shame so elbows him: his own unkindness
> That stripped her from his benediction, turned her
> To foreign casualties, gave her dear rights
> To his dog-hearted daughters – these things sting
> His mind so venomously that burning shame
> Detains him from Cordelia. (4.3.42-47)

There are parallels here with the Christian pilgrim accepting Christ's unconditional love

when they have sinned against him and are seeking to repent. Lear, in not wanting to even see Cordelia, is like the publican in Christ's parable who, "would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven" (Luke 18.13). Cordelia is as a Christ figure that the sinner, Lear, does not want to look upon because of "burning shame". However, Cordelia forgives her father, and as forgiver, she is again paralleled with Christ. Her forgiveness enables Lear to be born again, just as Christ's forgiveness enables the sinner to be born again.

And lastly, in an inversed pieta, Lear enters carrying the murdered Cordelia, his saviour – child, in his arms. To me, the pieta image, coupled with Cordelia calling her father "poor perdu" (4.7.35) , meaning poor lost one, again sets her up as a Christ-like figure, as Christ too came "to save that which was lost" (Matt. 18:11). The sheer power of the stage image of the inverse pieta means that the final moments of the play parallel Cordelia with Christ in a most corporeal and visceral way. Cordelia's body is deliberately framed through this inversed pieta as the innocently killed saviour child. Also, this inverted pieta serves as a culminating visual symbol of Cordelia as iconic.

During the play Cordelia is transformed into a religious icon. The Gentleman who reports to Kent of Cordelia's response to his letters, says in hyperbole which stops just short of deifying her:

> You have seen
> Sunshine and rain at once; her smiles and her tears
> Were like a better way; those happy smilets
> That played on her ripe lip seem not to know
> What guests were in her eyes, which parted thence

> As pearls from diamonds dropped. In brief,
>
> Sorrow would be rarity most beloved
>
> If all could so become it (4.3.17-24)

This is iconic language. The same Gentleman continues to relate to Kent, “There she shook / The holy water from her heavenly eyes” (4.3.29-30). The Gentleman’s language makes Cordelia to seem other worldly, from the heavens above and more than mere mortal. This elevation of Cordelia finds its culmination in the final image.

Edgar and Cordelia both, then, fulfil their pilgrimages by reaching out in love as Christ-like saviours to their fathers. It is in so doing that they experience the Turnerian phases of emblems of death, emblems of birth, and communitas in pilgrimage.

Chapter Three – Conclusion: Pilgrimage Narrative and Production Values

Having examined *King Lear* through a Turnerian lens, it becomes evident that the protagonists all undertake and experience pilgrimage. Indeed, it shows *King Lear* to be a pilgrimage narrative. The pilgrimages these characters undertake find profound parallels both with Christ's teachings and his redemptive role. Lear's pilgrimage parallels the Christian journey of being born again, by dying to one's former self, being re-born and learning deep love. Gloucester's pilgrimage highlights the need to feel as others feel in order for mercy and compassion to prevail, sharing deep resonances with the nature of Christ's atonement, wherein he felt as humans feel in order to succour them in mercy. And finally both Edgar and Cordelia's pilgrimages show them to parallel Christ as saviour figures, healing through forgiveness and tender care. These Christ-like parallels and resonances, inherent to the pilgrimage narrative, are where the potential for heavenly theatre lies.

As I have discussed, heavenly theatre is that theatre which invites the Holy Ghost, whose primary role is to bear spiritual witness of Christ's role and his teachings. Having traced the pilgrimage narrative as it is embedded in *King Lear*, it becomes clear that the pilgrims' journeys either parallel or exemplify Christ's role and his teachings, and in so doing have the potential to invite the Holy Ghost. However, the emphasis must be upon potential.

This potentiality of pilgrimage narrative to create heavenly theatre is integral. Just because a script, such as *King Lear*, has the pilgrimage narrative embedded within it, it doesn't mean that any and every production of the play becomes heavenly theatre. As I have discussed, the narrative is the first stepping stone towards heavenly theatre.

Production values, meaning the rehearsal process, acting technique etc., become integral as to whether or not that potential within the script is realised. This is why pilgrimage narrative is only the first but vital step towards heavenly theatre. The same script incorporating pilgrimage narrative could become heavenly theatre in the hands of one company, and not with another. The production values are integral as to whether the script is utilised to create heavenly theatre or not. However, as decisive as the production values are, I maintain that a company should look first to the narrative as a starting place for heavenly theatre. Without the narrative lending itself to heavenly theatre, the company's efforts will not make it such, and vice versa, pilgrimage narrative within a script will not be heavenly theatre without the company embracing production values that lend themselves to heavenly theatre. Therefore, in relation to chapter one of this thesis, I argued that the practitioners examined largely omitted narrative as integral to the search for sacred theatre. However, there needs to be a healthy symbiotic relationship between narrative and production values in order for heavenly theatre to occur. I have chosen to focus on narrative in this thesis, specifically pilgrimage narrative, and I have elucidated how that pilgrimage narrative is embedded in *King Lear.* In the conclusion, I will suggest production values that could lend themselves to the creation of heavenly theatre, though the scope of this thesis does not allow this final exploration to be thorough. In so doing, my hope ultimately is that the entire thesis can be a springboard to those seeking to create sacred or heavenly theatre. In this next section I will propose those production values that, coupled with pilgrimage narrative within the script, could make heavenly theatre possible.

Just as the characters in pilgrimage narrative experience the Turnerian emblems of death, birth, and communitas, I would like to suggest that a theatrical company, in undertaking the mammoth task of creating heavenly theatre, must do likewise. The company as a whole needs to experience pilgrimage narrative together during the rehearsal process, through individuals experiencing emblems of death, birth and communitas. How is such a journey manifested? I will talk about the results or fruits of a company undertaking such a pilgrimage journey together, before I discuss the working paradigms or production values that would enable it to happen. This is so the destination for this company pilgrimage is clear before I examine the route or map that could lead to it.

In some respects, all rehearsal processes encompass certain Turnerian attributes of emblems of death. This is the case whether the company is actively seeking heavenly theatre or not. Some of those attributes which are apparent in all rehearsal processes are liminality, being outside of a mundane structure, invisibility and wilderness. The entire working process of theatre is liminality, characterised by "betwixt and between." The rehearsal process is inherently "betwixt and between", as there is not a fully formed or fleshed out performance, but neither is there a void. There is a form taking shape that is "betwixt and between" life and death. A company rehearsing a new show are taken out of their familiar cultural environment, creating this "betwixt and between" sensation: "…movements betwixt and between the formerly familiar and stable and the not-yet familiar and stable" (Turner, *Blazing* 132). This liminality takes the company, during the rehearsal process, outside of the mundane structure of the world, another Turnerian emblem of death. This sense of being outside of the mundane structure of life during the

rehearsal process is actually the appeal of acting to many performers. During this process, the rehearsals make them invisible, secluded from the eyes of others. This is because rehearsals are, by and large, private affairs, making a darkness and wilderness of sorts as the company work towards the unknown destination of the final production, all Turnerian attributes of emblems of death. However, there are other attributes that are of absolute necessity for a company seeking to create heavenly theatre, but that don't always happen in every rehearsal process. These are loss of name and a stripping of status and authority.

In seeking to create heavenly theatre that invites the Holy Ghost, individuals in a company need to, metaphorically speaking, experience the Turnerian loss of name in pilgrimage, meaning a humbleness from all concerned. This is achieved by a voluntary stripping of status and authority, wherein such status or authority would work against individuals experiencing communion with each other in communitas. They need to be prepared to "die" to certain aspects of their former selves. Whether this is an actor's pride, akin to Lear's pride, or a director's Gloucesterian blindness in seeing others feelings clearly, individuals in the company must be prepared to strip themselves of those things. There may well be ordeal in this process for a company, as all involved seek to strip themselves of certain aspects of their former selves that lead them to elevate themselves above others in the company.

At the same time, all rehearsal processes, paradoxically, encompass emblems of birth. During rehearsals the production is, again metaphorically speaking, in the womb. There is gestation as the production grows and forms and takes shape, and the birthing process as it is prepared for public viewing. However, for a company seeking heavenly theatre, the gestation period would not just be the growth and development of the

production itself, but more importantly it would be the growth and development of individual actors as they actively seek to overcome certain aspects of their former selves, whether this be pride, a lack of love, a combative approach to either receiving or giving direction. And it is this attempt that leads to communitas.

I would argue that whilst there are inevitable friendships formed between some individuals in any theatrical production, for an entire company to experience communitas together is rare. However, I would propose that this company communitas is vital for heavenly theatre to occur. In a very real way, all theatrical productions are documentaries. They are a documentary of the rehearsal process, and when a company experiences communitas together I believe something profound and powerful is evidenced on stage in performance that elevates a production to heavenly theatre. This is the "magical quality" that the Turners' observed of communitas.

This communitas as a company together would also incorporate the Turnerian findings of lowliness and homogenization, meaning there would be humility and equality, leading to communion between individuals. This communion would be a spiritual interaction between company members: sacred fellowship. In this environment, company members would experience there own *axis mundi*, or connection between the heavens and the earth. There would be healing and renewal for individuals involved, by and through their interactions with others.

This communitas is vital for heavenly theatre for two reasons. When a company experience communitas together the process becomes heavenly theatre for them. This means it is a rehearsal experience wherein they regularly feel the manifestation of deity in the form of the Holy Ghost, leading to them feeling the spiritual fruits of "love, joy,

peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness" (Galatians 5:22). This is manifest on stage, perhaps in intangible ways, but the communitas is extended out as an offering to the audience. Also, when it is evidenced on stage the Holy Ghost can bear witness of it to the audience. In other words, the Holy Ghost can touch individuals in the audience not just because the narrative parallels Christ and his teachings, but because the actual event taking place on stage, the relationships between actors on stage and their feelings for the audience, manifest Christ's teachings to love one another deeply: communitas. Whilst this communitas between a cast can be manifest to an audience, I maintain that heavenly theatre requires both narrative and this company pilgrimage leading to communitas. Occasionally, cast communitas on stage can transcend the confines of a script that doesn't maintain pilgrimage narrative, and some audience members may experience heavenly theatre. However, when cast communitas is combined with the foundation of pilgrimage narrative, many more audience members are able to experience heavenly theatre.

The company then, in seeking to create heavenly theatre, must go on a pilgrimage together, incorporating emblems of death and emblems of birth which lead to communitas. In so doing they create their own pilgrimage narrative. When a script incorporates the pilgrimage narrative, and is performed by a company who have experienced a pilgrimage together during the process, then heavenly theatre is a very real possibility. Inevitably in the audience reception of such work there is the phenomenological aspect of the work to be considered. I don't think it is valid to argue that all audience members will receive the work differently and that heavenly theatre is purely a phenomenological experience depending upon the audience members

experiences on a certain day. Such an approach negates all genuine efforts of critical research into the arts. Instead, I would argue that these steps of pilgrimage narrative performed by a company that have experienced a pilgrimage journey together is far more likely to result in heavenly theatre for the majority of audience members. Of course, due to the phenomenology of theatre attendance, some audience members may not receive it as such. I do not write of a formula to fit all, but instead of guidelines that lend themselves more readily than other theatrical paradigms to the holy.

But the questions need to be asked, how does a company undergo this pilgrimage journey together? What production values or over-arching working paradigm needs to be in place for this to occur? Who puts that structure in place, how, and why? Does this company, seeking to undergo a pilgrimage experience in the pursuit of creating heavenly theatre, need to be Christian believers themselves? Or could a company of people with diverse belief structures undergo this experience together? These are some important questions I will now seek to address.

The first thing to be established is that the pilgrimage journey of a company together, and the production values that would foster that journey, are initially put in place by the director. To that extent, it is a director driven initiative. This is no doubt why all the theatre practitioners I reviewed in chapter one were directors. In their search to create sacred or holy theatre they positioned themselves as directors to facilitate it. This is because it is the director, more than any other figure in theatre, which creates the working paradigm and fosters the production values (meaning rehearsal technique and structure, acting style, etc).

I have experienced this director driven initiative to enable the company to undertake a pilgrimage journey together. This was in the context of a group of LDS actors coming together to rehearse and perform the Nauvoo Pageant in Nauvoo, Illinois, in the summer of 2006. This was under the funding and auspices of the LDS church. The production values enabled the pilgrimage. I will discuss these production values and then see how they can be replicated for those of divergent beliefs.

When I experienced this pilgrimage journey culminating in communitas with a company, there was a moral and ethical structure put in place at the start of the rehearsal process. We were actively encouraged to live Christ's teachings, most especially in our interactions with others and not gossiping. The guidelines were shared through discussion, and some hand outs on Christ-like living, as opposed to a formal list of do's and don'ts. If individuals had concerns at all they were encouraged to address them with the individuals concerned. Nor was this an attempt to stifle concerns with any leadership decisions, as we were encouraged to take any concerns we had with leadership directly to them. It was made apparent that blatant violations of this would lead to being asked to leave the group. This ethical working paradigm was adhered to as far as I was aware.

In a surprisingly similar parallel to the Turners' findings on pilgrimage, there was "loss of name" in a traditional theatrical sense in this experience together. This was because in the program for the performance, no names or resumes for anyone in the company were printed, which is certainly the norm in theatre. This paralleled the religious painters of the medieval age who didn't sign their paintings, that practice not coming about until the Renaissance. More profoundly, there was "loss of name" through no sense of "stars" or leads who were more important to the process that anyone else.

Individuals were humble in their various capacities. In a very real sense, the working paradigm realised Paul's scriptural injunction: "the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee" (2 Cor. 12.21).

Coupled with an ethical paradigm was the use of religious ritual to enable the cast to experience pilgrimage together. The rituals that were an integral part of the rehearsal process were prayers, the sharing of scriptures and gospel teaching, hymn singing, attending the LDS Temple, wherein ritual is integral to the worship, and testifying, wherein individuals share their innermost convictions of their faith. These rituals, coupled with the ethical paradigm in place, helped precipitate individual pilgrimage experiences.

The acting style fostered was somewhat Grotowskian, inasmuch as actors were encouraged to strip away all their false pretences and share from their souls. Whilst there was little emphasis placed upon physicality, which is integral to Grotowski, this concept of stripping bare, or stripping away all that was extraneous in performance, shared parallels with him. There was also a great emphasis placed upon the performance being for what was seen within the company as a higher cause, namely proselytizing endeavours. This proselytizing was seen as higher, meaning of greater importance and ultimately worth, than other potential benefits of the production: enjoyment for audience and cast, escapism, or aesthetic pleasure, those these could lead towards eventual proselytizing. All of these things combined, a moral working paradigm, ritual which was deeply familiar and meaningful to all involved, a stripped bare acting style and a higher cause for the work enabled the company to undergo pilgrimage together, resulting in

communitas. These were the production values that encouraged and enabled the pilgrimage to occur.

However, I believe that this company pilgrimage can be experienced by a secular company, who can come together and commit themselves to becoming new, better individuals in and through the working experience, and ultimately to have true communitas together. I use the term secular theatre or a secular company to mean a group with divergent beliefs and religious and spiritual backgrounds. It is to differentiate from a company composed of individuals with the same religious beliefs, coming together under the auspices of that religion. I do not mean the term to imply that companies with people from different belief structures or backgrounds do not or cannot create work of spiritual and religious import. Furthermore, when speaking of secular companies I will revert to the terms sacred or holy theatre as I used them in chapter one. This is because a secular company's aims may not be tied specifically to the Christian doctrine of the Holy Ghost, though they still seek to create sacred or holy theatre, meaning theatre that in general engenders feelings of profound spirituality, akin to worship.

With that definition in place, the initial question is why such a paradigm would be set up and committed to in secular theatre, as the paradigm at initial glance seems a Christian one. However, this paradigm, of seeking to become better individuals leading to communitas, finds similarities within every religion and altruistic movement and impulse, including humanism. In other words, for a company to embrace it, they are turning to an innate human desire, which is clearly manifest in religious tradition**.** Inasmuch as they are doing this, it could be said on one level that a company are looking to ethical impulse to create their theatre, which is also the bedrock of the religious impulse.

This ties back to Walter Kerr's argument examined in chapter one. He argued that theatre needs to be born from religion, instead of reversing the process, as theatre practitioners were trying to do. Kerr implied that theatre practitioners needed to go to religion to find their theatre, rather than trying to find their religion from theatre. His conclusions seemed to me to be focused on going to religion to find the subject matter of plays. However, perhaps this looking to religion to birth theatre anew, as Kerr termed it, is not just by looking to religion to find the subject matter, but it is also the working process of theatre, the production values of rehearsals, that needs to look to religion also. I have examined the Christian model of pilgrimage narrative, but believe this exemplifies a more general pattern found in nearly all religions and which is innate to human nature, of seeking to better oneself in the attributes of goodness (in Christianity this is through dying to ones former self and being born again in Christ), and coming in turn to love others more profoundly. Is this a deeply religious archetypal pattern that both religious and secular theatre practitioners can look to for a working paradigm, to enable religion to birth theatre anew, as Kerr said it must? Is there a general religious pattern here that, if pursued in earnest, could fulfil Brook's plea: "if the need for a true contact with a sacred invisibility through the theatre still exists, then all possible vehicles must be re-examined" (Brook 54). The Turnerian pilgrimage narrative that I have examined in chapter two is ultimately a deeply religious pattern, and though the ethical impulse is also found in altruistic secular tradition, it needs to be recognised as a deeply religious pattern. Is this then a feasible working theatrical paradigm, that would better enable this "…true contact with a sacred invisibility"? This would be theatre looking to religion for an approach to creation, not merely subject matter. It would not be seeking to replace

religion but would draw inspiration from it, and perhaps, through both subject matter and production values, point back to it.

Thus it can be seen that this working paradigm is at home in major religions. As such, I think a secular company can acknowledge that they are seeking to look to an innate human impulse, expressed explicitly though not solely in religion, of seeking to become better individuals through the working process and cultivate deep love in their company, in order to create and share holy or sacred theatre. The paradigm is set up to enable or further the search to create holy theatre. However, perhaps it would also be set up not just for the end result of holy theatre, but for the benefit of the individual company, whether it is a community group, a youth theatre group or indeed a professional company. In other words, a director may decide to use this model with the main goal of creating holy theatre for the audience, or they may decide to use it with their main goal being for the benefit of the group. Or their motivation may indeed be both. How then is this paradigm set up in secular theatre?

Again, it needs to be a director driven initiative. The director, in seeking to create holy theatre for the audience or a profound spiritual experience for their company, or both, must, I believe, place some sort of ethical working paradigm in place. The nature of the ethical structure they put in place and work within themselves would be somewhat dictated by the nature of their group. It may be different moral and ethical guidelines that they focus on when working with a youth group when compared to a professional company. However, there may be some principles that are integral for any group to try and foster, namely, humility, kindness, an outlook focused on the needs of others, as

opposed to a self-centred approach, patience, tolerance, and an avoidance of talking about others negatively.

These things would foster an environment wherein individuals could undergo personal pilgrimages, leading to company communitas. The director would need to be the example of these principles. However, I don't think it would be enough to influence the entire company for the director just to work personally in this manner. I think they would need to establish this ethical working paradigm with their company, so that the entire company could uphold it. This again shares parallels with Grotowski's production values. Grotowski had high expectations of his individual company members and they could expect to be dismissed from the company if they didn't adhere to them. These were embodied in his "Statement of Principles," an eight page document which he handed out to new cast members during their trial or probationary period in the troupe. In this he was adamant that company members not talk frivolously or idly about other actors work. He called for discipline and self-sacrifice from the actor, restraint of egotism, keeping quarrels, conflicts and animosities at bay, strict punctuality and memorization, care of one's physical body in readiness to create, and boundless sincerity, to name but a few (Grotowski 255-62).

This then is the placement of an ethical structure to aid the pilgrimage journey for a secular company to create heavenly theatre. What then of ritual for a secular company? The Turnerian definition of ritual is a transformative performance (Turners 244). This is the function these rituals would need to fulfil in secular theatre, the transformation in this instance being the binding together of individuals into a community, which fosters some degree of spiritual fellowship or awareness. How this could be done, the rituals

employed, would be at the discretion of individual directors according to the age and maturity of the group. Some suggestions might be as follows.

One small ritual, that has religious connotations as well as practical application, is the removal of shoes in the rehearsal space. This is actually something Grotowski practiced. It shares connotations with the Lord asking Moses to remove his shoes when he appeared to him on Mount Horeb, paralleling the rehearsal space with "holy ground" (Exodus 3:5). Another I have experienced is the use of silence to begin rehearsals or as part of the rehearsal process. Still others may be company singing, whether such songs are a part of the production or not. Warm-ups may become ritualistic in nature for a company, following a set pattern of physical and vocal exercises that foster this fellowship. This again shares parallels with Grotowski who employed many rigorous warm-ups to aid the ultimate spirituality of the work (Grotowski 133-175). Furthermore, secular companies can utilise the equivalent of bearing testimony in religious theatre, meaning company members are actively encouraged to share their innermost spiritual thoughts in relation to the work at hand and the experiences they have in doing it. Repeated regularly, these things become ritual for a company, designed to foster spiritual fellowship, vital to communitas. The nature of the rituals used are various and ultimately dependent upon the creativity and nature of the director, and of the company also if they desire to be involved with creating the secular rituals. Whilst these rituals may not initially entail the same power for a secular company that pre-existing rituals have for a religious company, during the process they can come to bind the group together in a powerful way, fulfilling some of the same functions as religious ritual.

In seeking to utilise acting principles that could aid a company's pilgrimage journey together, and in so doing lend itself to the creation of holy or indeed heavenly theatre, a director could look to Brook and Grotowski's writings on the matter. Brook discovered that, "The actor then found that to communicate his invisible meanings he needed concentration, he needed will; he needed to summon all his emotional reserves; he needed courage; he needed clear thought" (Brook 57). There is an element of effort and sacrifice in this acting style that Brook sought for. Likewise with Grotowski, who asked his actors to "sacrifice" themselves for the audience. He called upon his actors to undergo both a gruelling physical and spiritual sacrifice for the audience member by stripping themselves of all affectation, conceit and actors "tricks." I am somewhat wary of suggesting rehearsal techniques and exercises that can lead to this sense of sacrifice in performance. This is mainly because of their reticence in their rehearsal techniques being used in all situations when they are not at all appropriate for those situations. I see their principles of acting as a good starting point, because they encourage or lend themselves to the pilgrimage journey, which also requires effort and sacrifice. Beyond that, a director really must develop their own concept and approach to fostering acting principles that aids this pilgrimage journey and sacred theatre.

What becomes apparent when reviewing all of the practitioners from chapter one, is that the driving force behind all of their production values was a higher cause, and I believe this higher cause would be necessary for a secular company who were seeking to create holy or heavenly theatre. For Brook, it is to put the audience in contact with the "sacred invisibility;" for Artaud, it is liberation from societal ties and a cleansing of society in the process; for Grotowski, the higher cause is to help audience members

overcome their solitude and enable an atonement of sorts; for Schechner it is to create a community for the audience, akin to a community in worship; and for Turner, the higher goal is to build bridges of understanding and indeed love to otherwise very foreign cultures. These higher causes for these practitioners all necessitated production values to meet that end. Likewise today, if they truly desire to create sacred or heavenly theatre, a secular company needs a higher cause to focus their efforts on and motivate their pilgrimages of individual betterment and profound love. In other words, it is not enough to desire to create sacred theatre without articulating what that means, or the reason for pursuing it. That higher cause may be slightly different from company to company, though they all come under the umbrella of sacred or holy theatre. In my experience with religious theatre, the higher cause that aided the pilgrimage journey for the company was the proselytizing impact and opportunities the production entailed.

I am aware that the model I have suggested here for a secular company follows the experiences I had when performing in a religious company, namely an ethical paradigm, ritual, an acting style that requires effort and sacrifice, and a higher cause. I am following Kerr's suggestion in this parallel, and encouraging secular companies to look to religious paradigms to aid them in finding a theatrical working paradigm to foster the creation of sacred theatre. This should not be viewed as an overly prescriptive working paradigm, but one that could be adopted and built upon by any company, religious or secular, as production values that aid the creation of holy or sacred theatre. Ultimately I believe that these efforts to create holy or sacred theatre lend themselves to heavenly theatre, wherein the Holy Ghost is present.

Dean Duncan, an LDS film scholar, has explored what he has chosen to term charitable cinema, his understanding of which perhaps shares some attributes with my thoughts on heavenly theatre. Of his understanding of charitable cinema, Duncan has written:

> The cinema of charity has the power to transcend sectarian and national boundaries. It is sometimes informed by but not necessarily dependent on doctrine or creed. More importantly, at least and especially for ecumenical conversations, it reflects a more general, accessible religious impulse, one central to practically all of the great religious traditions. Its narrative and stylistic characteristics are as diverse as the religions, cultures and individuals that ply it. The cinema of charity is marked more than anything by its attitude, toward cinematic subjects and spectators alike. This attitude is courteous, compassionate, generous and sympathetic. These are films made with love…Here, perhaps, is the mystery of the religious film, if not of godliness. As with much sacred experience, the effects of all this diverse film work, as well as of our own cinematic and social attention and effort, are difficult to describe, the causes of said effect difficult to lay hold of. But the feelings, the result in generous inclination and charitable application, are nevertheless palpable. Charitable cinema, attending the entire history of the medium, has had and continues to have the power to smooth over cultural gaps and religious misunderstanding, to begin a binding of the heterogeneous in mutual appreciation and gratitude. (Duncan)

This “generous inclination and charitable application” that Duncan speaks of, is, in my understanding of heavenly theatre, the result of a manifestation of deity, namely the Holy Ghost. And here I would like to stress that the Holy Ghost’s role is in bearing spiritual witness not only of Christ, but of his teachings. Many of Christ’s teachings, most especially those that relate to how people should interact with each other, are found across the religious, cultural and social spectrum. These teachings on how we should interact with others are, to name but a few, forgiveness, kindness and compassion, caring, especially for the vulnerable and needy, honesty and integrity, seeking peace, enduring suffering, humility, purity, and profound and selfless love for others. Through doing this, individuals may also experience trials, tribulation, sorrow and opposition. Duncan identifies this love as being integral to all great religious traditions. Concurring with him, but writing of heavenly theatre from within my own faith, I believe that whenever these teachings are exonerated and explored in theatre, in a diverse range of cultural, social or religious settings, the Holy Ghost can bear record of them, leading to the charitable impulse in the individual that Duncan speaks of. These Christian teachings, which are core to so many major religious traditions, lend themselves to heavenly theatre when they are both embedded and explored within the narrative, as they are in pilgrimage narrative, and embedded and lived within the rehearsal process.

Binding this thesis is the healing, altruistic, edifying and ultimately redemptive power of love. Love is a central concern of the Turners’ findings on pilgrimage, the communitas that leads to healing, communion and renewal. Likewise in *King Lear* the very heart of the play, the unifying heart of the pilgrimages I’ve explored, is love.

One of the few critics to have recognised that love is the heart of this play is

Harold Bloom. However, as I have discussed, Bloom sees that love as ultimately only a destructive force within *King Lear*, writing: "Love, whether it be Lear's for Cordelia, or Edgar's for his father, Gloucester, or for his godfather, Lear, is pragmatically a waste in this most tragic of all tragedies" (Bloom 482). He also writes, "Love, in any of its modes, familial or erotic or social, is transformed by Shakespeare, more than any other writer, into the greatest of dramatic and aesthetic values. Yet more than any other writer, Shakespeare divests love of any supposed values of its own" (Bloom 487). I disagree with Bloom's reading of the effects of love in *King Lear*, and instead see that love in this play is a source of deep hope, a seemingly improbable, and yet present force, that lifts and crucially redeems humankind from becoming monsters, like Regan, Gonerill, Cornwall or Edmund. Indeed, it is only really this capacity to truly love unconditionally, and learn compassion for others, that begins to separate the monstrous characters from the humane characters in this play. Edgar kills two people in this play, Oswald and his half-brother; indeed he kills more people than it is reported either Gonerill or Regan do, and yet they are abhorrent to us, and he is not. Why? Because of his capacity to love and feel compassion toward others, which influences and colours all he does, including his sense of justice. Edgar loves and they do not. They become monsters, Edgar does not. These things may appear evident, but to recognise love as the heart of *King Lear,* and that it is not a destructive force but a redemptive one, is vital.

Love is Cordelia's motivation in her Christ-like pilgrimage to save her father. Likewise love is what leads Edgar to forgive his father and to "cure" and heal him (4.6.35). Love for Lear motivates Gloucester to begin his pilgrimage of moral action in standing against Regan and Cornwall, and whilst love may not have been Lear's

motivating force in beginning his pilgrimage towards death, his love for Cordelia ultimately becomes the heart of his pilgrimage experience. These protagonists undertake journeys that parallel profoundly Christian pilgrimage and Christ's atonement, of which love is also at the heart.

The heart of Christ's atonement is not suffering for sufferings sake, but suffering results from Christ's and God's deep redemptive love. The scriptures are clear on this. Perhaps one of the most well known scriptures in all of Christendom, John 3.16, states explicitly that love was why Christ's journey took place: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Furthermore we read, "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God" (Eph. 5.2). Within Christian doctrine, Christ suffered for humankind out of deep love, and that love is the very heart, the redemptive reason for the atonement and Christ's pilgrimage to complete it.

Love, then, is the redemptive power in pilgrimage as the Turners observed it; it is the redemptive heart of *King Lear*; it is the redemptive heart of the atonement, and I would like to propose that it needs to be the heart of a company's pilgrimage journey together to create heavenly theatre.

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